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سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 18 NOVEMBER 2024 | MONDAY | BENGALURU | 15 JUMADA I, 1446 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 292 | Pages: 8

Mob attempts to storm Manipur CM's home

Homes of 4 more MLAs burnt; security fire tear gas shells & rubber bullets; Shah reviews situation

IMPHAL, 17 NOV

Irate mobs set fire to the residences of three more BJP legislators, one of whom is a senior minister, and a Congress MLA in Imphal Valley even as security forces foiled the attempt of agitators to storm the ancestral residence of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, officials said.

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on reviewed the security situation and directed top officials to take all possible steps to restore order peace the state.

Shah held the meeting soon after he returned from Maharashtra after cancelling his election rallies there.

The fresh incidents of violent protests took place on Saturday even as indefinite curfew was clamped after people, agitated by the killing of three women and children each by militants in Jiribam, attacked the residences of three state ministers and six MLAs earlier on Saturday. Enraged people torched the houses of PWD Minister Govindas Konthoujam at Ningthoukhong, Hiyanglam's BJP MLA Y Radheshyam at Langmeidong Bazar, Wangjing Tentha's BJP MLA Paonam Brojen in Thoubal district and Khundrakpam's Congress MLA Th Lokeshwar in Imphal East district, the officials said.

Tyres set on fire by people protesting after bodies of six people were found, days after they were taken hostage by suspected insurgents from Manipur's Jiribam district, on Saturday night **PHOTO: PTI**

On Saturday night, protesters also advanced towards Biren's ancestral residence at Luwangshangbam in Imphal East but were stopped short of 100-200m by security. Security fired several rounds of tear gas shells, rubber bullets to disperse the protesters.

Later, protesters burnt tyres on the main road leading to Biren's residence and piled iron roads to prevent vehicular movement. On Sunday, the situation remained calm but tense in all five districts of Imphal Valley, where an indefinite curfew has been imposed and internet services suspended.

At night, miscreants set fire to at least two churches and three houses in Jiribam town, officials said. Manipur government also requested the Centre to review and withdraw AFSPA from areas falling under the jurisdiction of six police stations in the state. *—PTI*

Headless toddler, grandmom found dead in river

A two-year-old boy and his grandma were reportedly killed by militants in Manipur. Their bodies were found floating between the broken branches of a tree in a river.

Herojit, the father for the boy Chingheinganba whose body was found told NDTV that the a 60-year-old woman was his mother-in-law Y Rani Devi.

Additionally, bodies of his eight-month-old baby, sister-in-law, and his wife were later recovered.

Herojit said his wife, two children, mother-in-law, and sister-in-law were taken hostage by militants encounter on Monday. *—Salar News*

NPP cuts off ties with ally BJP in Manipur

SHILLONG, 17 NOV

The National People's Party (NPP) has officially withdrawn its support from the BJP-led government in Manipur, citing a failure to address the ongoing violence and restore normalcy in the northeastern state.

The NPP, which holds seven seats in the 60-member Manipur assembly, stated that the administration, led by Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, has "completely failed" to resolve the crisis. The party highlighted the escalating suffering of the populace, with the recent letter to BJP President JP Nadda noting, "Innocent lives have been lost, and people in the state are going through immense suffering."

However, despite the NPP's withdrawal, the stability of the government is not in jeopardy, as the BJP maintains an absolute majority with 32 legislators, bolstered by five members of the Naga People's Front (NPF) and six from the Janata Dal (United). On the other hand, Congress party has five seats, alongside three independents in the assembly. This move comes on the heels of the Kuki People's Alliance (KPA), another party aligned with the BJP, also retracting its support due to ethnic violence in the region. The situation in Manipur has deteriorated since May last year, with over 200 fatalities and thousands left homeless amid conflict between the Meiteis and Kukis. *—PTI*

INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TESTS LONG-RANGE HYPERSONIC MISSILE

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

In a major boost to its military prowess, India has successfully flight-tested a long-range hypersonic missile off the coast of Odisha. This achievement has put the country in a select group of nations having the weapon that can strike with extreme speed and evade most air-defence systems.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described the missile test on Saturday under the country's first long-range hypersonic mission as a "stupendous" achievement and a "historic moment".

The missile, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is designed to carry various payloads for ranges greater than 1,500 km, an official readout said.

Generally, hypersonic missiles, capable of carrying conventional explosives or nuclear warheads, can fly in the range of five times the speed of sound (Mach 5, which is roughly 1,220km) per hour at sea level.

However, some advanced versions of hypersonic missiles can even fly at the speed of more than 15 mach.

At present, Russia and China are way ahead in developing hypersonic missiles, while the United States is in the process of developing a range of such weapons under an ambitious programme. *—PTI*

'GAVE AADHAAR CARDS'

Intel says Soren gave shelter to B'deshis in madrasas: Nadda

BOKARO/DHANBAD/JAMTARA, 17 NOV

BJP President JP Nadda on Sunday claimed that according to an "intelligence report", the JMM-led coalition government in Jharkhand gave shelter to Bangladeshi infiltrators in madrasas and ensured that they got land and government documents like Aadhaar card.

Nadda also hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi saying that he wants to become champion of Other Backward Classes, but questioned how many OBC members were in Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, a social service organisation headed by Sonia Gandhi, and the National Advisory Committee of the UPA regime.

While addressing a rally at Gomia in Bokaro, Nadda said, "Hemant Soren looted 'Jal, Jungle, Jameen' (water, forest, land) of Jharkhand. Infiltration is rampant here. Infiltrators are marrying tribal women and grabbing their land. We will bring a law to ensure that their offspring is debarred from getting the land. Only Modi-led BJP government can check infiltration," he said.

He also termed the entire JMM-RJD-Congress as a family

JP Nadda **PHOTO: PTI**

of corrupt people, claiming that INDIA bloc leaders were either in jail or out on bail.

"Soren, who is out on bail, will again go to prison. He is indulged in Rs 5,000-crore mining scam, Rs 236-crore land scam," Nadda alleged.

Cong moves EC

Congress on Sunday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission of India (ECI) seeking stern action against the BJP for allegedly continuing its "communal and divisive" campaign in Jharkhand. In the complaint registered with the poll panel, the second in a week, Congress General Secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh accused Jharkhand BJP of spreading "false and misleading" information on social media. *—PTI*

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N KOREA IRKS SOUTH TOWNS WITH NOISE BOMBING

SEOUL, 17 NOV

North Korea has escalated its psychological warfare tactics against South Korea by using loudspeakers to broadcast disturbing and unsettling sounds across the border, The New York Times reports. Since July, these loudspeakers have been active around the clock, replacing traditional propaganda messages with nerve-rattling noises designed to unsettle South Korean residents near the border, particularly in Dangsan village.

Among the sounds blasted from the North are howls of wolves, unsettling roar of artillery fire, and sounds of bomb explosions. This is part of a broader escalation in tensions between the two Koreas. *—Agencies*

FREEDOM ON TWO WHEELS

Bikers take to the air in Round 5 of 2024 MRF MOGRIP FMSCI Indian National Supercross Championship in Bengaluru on Sunday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Delhi minister quits AAP; party blames CBI, ED

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

In a setback to AAP ahead of Delhi Assembly polls, its senior leader and city Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot quit the party on Sunday.

In his resignation letter to AAP Convener Arvind Kejriwal, the 50-year-old pointed to the "grave challenges" facing the party

Gahlot, a prominent figure in

PHOTO: ANI

the party, also took a jab at Kejriwal while flagging some "awkward" and "embarrassing" controversies like 'sheeshmahal', saying it makes everyone doubt if "we still believe in being the 'Aam Aadmi'".

Gahlot's reference to the 'sheeshmahal' controversy comes against the backdrop of BJP leaders' charge that Kejriwal spent crores on lavish items and modern facilities at his former official residence at 6 Flagstaff Road. BJP had dubbed Kejriwal's earlier residence as 'sheeshmahal'.

Gahlot, the MLA from Najafgarh, tendered his resignation from the council of ministers with immediate effect.

AAP leaders said Gahlot was facing ED and CBI cases and he had no option left but to join BJP.

Gahlot was also in-charge of the portfolios of Home, Administrative Reforms, IT and Women and Child Development. *—PTI*

WHILE MAKING REELS

3 women drown at pool in M'luru resort

MYSURU, 17 NOV

Three young women from Mysuru drowned in a swimming pool at Vazco's Resort in Someshwara village, near Mangaluru, on Sunday while attempting to record a reel.

The victims are Keerthana N, 21; Nishitha MD, 21; and Parvathi S, 20; who died in the resort pool around 10am.

The three women visited the resort on Saturday for a weekend getaway near Ullal Beach.

While enjoying their time at the pool, they placed their mobile phones nearby to record videos for reels. According to the police, the girls likely ventured into the deeper part of the pool, which is about 6ft deep.

Probe suggests that Nishitha, who reportedly didn't know how to swim,

Authorities have sealed the resort over safety lapses **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

entered the deep end of the pool first and began to struggle. Parvathi jumped in to try and rescue her, but she, too, became caught in the distress. Keerthana attempted to save both of her friends but was unable to escape the dangerous waters, and all three women drowned.

Mangaluru Police Commissioner Anupam Agrawal said all the three died of "accidental drowning". Noting that certain safety conditions need to be followed at resorts with swimming pools such as—having life-saving equipment, lifeguards, mentioning the depth, among others, he said, "There were lapses, as none of these were in place. On inquiring police were informed that seven employees were on duty at the resort."

There are lapses, as CCTV footage shows women shouting for help, but no one responds or comes near the pool, the Commissioner said, and added that "were there no one to help or were staff less, it needs to be looked into."

According to official sources, the authorities have sealed the resort and measures will be taken to temporarily suspend the trade license and other tourism related permits issued to it. *—Salar News with Agencies*

Udupi Congress leader's son runs over biker in SUV, arrested

UDUPI, 17 NOV

A 26-year-old man, the son of a prominent Congress leader, was arrested on Sunday in a hit-and-run incident that led to the death of a 39-year-old biker in Udupi district.

Prajwal Shetty, son of Belapu-based Congress leader Deviprasad Shetty, allegedly struck Mohammad Hussain, who was on a bike, with his speeding SUV near the Belapu Military Colony in Kapu taluk. The incident occurred around 5 am on 13 November, and despite the crash, Shetty reportedly fled the scene without offering any assistance to the victim.

The incident was captured on CCTV, which proved to be crucial evidence in identifying the vehicle and its driver. According to police, the footage showed Shetty's SUV colliding with Hussain's bike, after which the vehicle sped away.

Prajwal Shetty is the son of Cong leader Deviprasad Shetty **PHOTO: X**

Locals quickly rushed Hussain, who sustained severe injuries, to the KMC Hospital in Ajjarkad. Despite efforts to save him, Hussain succumbed to his injuries on 14 November.

The Shirva police in Udupi registered a case of fatal accident and launched an investigation into the matter. Shetty's vehicle was seized, and he was subsequently arrested under charges of causing death by negligent driving and fleeing the scene of the accident. After questioning, he was released on bail. *—Salar News with Agencies*

Kannada writer asks people to act against social evils

MYSURU, 17 NOV

Senior Kannada writer Prof Kalegowda Nagawar on Sunday expressed displeasure over the people especially on the educated class for not raising their voice against the injustice, blind belief, corruption like evils, practise of discrimination, other social evils which are still continuing in the society. Speaking after releasing a book on 'Hambalada Hanathe' penned by Maddur Doreswamy at Rangayana premises under the auspices of Desi Ranga Samskruthika Samsthe, the writer also condemned the pontiffs, religious heads of various communities for defending the corrupt politicians belonging to their communities and asserted that such a development is not acceptable in the society. *—Salar News*

Education Day celebration at Jaganmohan Palace

MYSURU, 17 NOV

Karnataka State Muslim Government Employees Welfare Association (KSGMEWA) will celebrate the National Education Day, Urdu Diwas and Kannada Rajyotsava at Jaganmohan Palace in the city on Tuesday at 9.30am.Anwar Pasha, the association's state organising secretary said at a press conference on Sunday that experts will discuss at the event the contributions of India's first higher education minister Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. Pasha said the KSGMEWA not only sensitized the Muslim community about the importance of education, but also provided guidance, training and help in getting placement. Educationist Prof Nabizan, KSGMEWA Mysuru district unit chief Syed Mudasser, General Secretary Azeez Khan and Vice President Syed Dastageer were present at the press meet. *—Salar News*

Mysuru: 549 litres of liquor destroyed

MYSURU, 17 NOV

The excise department officials on Friday destroyed 549 litres of unsold liquor stocked at Karnataka State Beverages Corporation Limited (KSBCL) depot in Koorgally in the city. The liquor bottles were destroyed in presence of Excise Deputy Superintendent HK Rameshkumar, stated a press release. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

Mahabhisheka performed to Nandi atop Chamundi Hill

MYSURU, 17 NOV

The Betta Balaga Charitable Trust on Sunday organised the annual Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony of the iconic Nandi statue on Chamundi Hills in presence of seers and thousands of devotees.The Trust has been organising this event for the past 19 years on the third Sunday of the Karthika Masa.Following the tradition, 36 puja articles were used for the Mahamastakabhisheka. The ritual involves pouring milk, curds, honey, ghee, sugarcane juice, dates, dry grapes, cashew nuts, fruits, turmeric, vermillion and sandal paste on the statue. After the conclusion of Mahamastakabhisheka, the Jalabhisheka (washing with water) was performed, following which the statue was decorated with a variety of flowers. The priests then performed Rudrabhisheka, followed by other rituals concluding Maha Mangalarathi. *—Salar News*

Got Lokayukta's clean chit in 40% commission case: BJP

Party leaders call allegations part of 'Cong tool kit'

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

The BJP on Sunday claimed that a Lokayukta probe has cleared the party's previous government in the state from the "40 per cent commission" charges. They said the allegations levelled by Congress, then Opposition, were completely "false" and part of its "tool kit".

During the 2023 Assembly polls, Congress had used the Karnataka State Contractors' Association's "40 per cent commission" charge as a key weapon to corner the then BJP government. This is said to be one of the factors that led to the saffron party's debacle in the election.

Reacting to the BJP's claims, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, "I have not seen the report yet. I will comment after I see it. Many cases get dismissed for want of evidence but that does not mean that the crime has not taken place. Wrong might have happened but not proved," he said.

During the 2023 polls, Congress used 40 per cent commission charge as a key weapon to corner the then BJP government **PHOTO: PTI**

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka said, "It is proved that the '40 per cent commission' allegation made against BJP is false. Congress, using (the then) state contractors' association president Kempanna and vice president as its tool kit, had alleged that the government was taking 40 per cent commission. The truth has now come out."

Ashoka said contractor R Ambikapathy, who had made allegations and claimed to have given the commission, had not worked as a contractor for six years.

"This contractor and other unemployed contractors became part of a Congress tool kit and made allegations against the Basavaraj Bommai government, calling us '40 per cent Sarakara (government)'. BJP workers questioned us about the allegations. Today, they are happy that the charges proved to be bogus and a tool kit of Congress and Siddaramaiah (then leader of Opposition)," he said.

Pointing out that the Congress government was unable to prove the charges in the past sixteen months after coming to power, Ashoka said they could not even submit the documents in the High Court, where the case is on. "Now the Lokayuukta has given the clean chit," he said.

Former chief minister BS Yediyurappa said in Shivamogga, "Lokayukta probe itself has said it (allegations were false). I appeal to them (Congress leaders) to speak carefully hereon." *—PTI*

BJP using Waqf for political gains: HM

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has accused the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of using the Waqf issue as a "political weapon", warning that strict action would be taken against any attempts to disturb peace in the state. His comments come as the BJP plans to ramp up its campaign against the Congress government over the Waqf matter, having set up three teams to meet with individuals affected by Waqf notices across various districts.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar echoed Parameshwara's concerns, asserting that the BJP is attempting to "create communal disturbance". Parameshwara expressed apprehensions about potential flare-ups, alleging the BJP may be using its yatra (tour) for such purposes.

While acknowledging scattered incidents, he emphasised that the police have largely maintained peace in the state. Furthermore, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has instructed officials to revoke all notices issued to farmers regarding their lands mistakenly marked as Waqf properties.

In response to BJP claims that a Lokayukta probe disproves allegations of corruption within the previous BJP government, Parameshwara refuted the idea that the Congress's rise to power was solely driven by corruption accusations. He stated that multiple factors contributed to their victory. *—PTI*

- In response to BJP claims that a Lokayukta probe disproves allegations of corruption within the previous BJP government, Parameshwara refuted the idea that the Congress's rise to power was solely driven by corruption accusations.

Parameshwara **PHOTO: PTI**

NO PROPOSAL YET

PHOTO: PTI

Only ineligible BPL cards will be weeded out: CM

BAGALKOT, 17 NOV

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday clarified that only ineligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) cardholders will be weeded out, and there will be no impact on eligible cardholders.

He said that he had given strict instructions to the food and civil supplies department that those eligible should not be left out.

Speaking to reporters here, he said the proposal still has not come before the Cabinet from the food and civil supplies department.

To a question on BJP challenging him to prove his allegation that Rs 50 crore bribe was offered by the party to 50 Congress MLAs to topple the Congress government, Siddaramaiah said, "they (BJP) have tried, but failed."

He also expressed confidence about Congress winning bypolls held for three Assembly segments -- Channapatna, Sandur and Shiggaon -- on 13 November. Counting of votes will be held on 23 November.

Reacting to a question on Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan recently referring to Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy as "Kaalia" and its implication on bypoll held in Channapatna, he said, "He should not have said such things, whatever relationship or affection they might have shared in the past." *—PTI*

CM DARES PM TO PROVE CORRUPTION CLAIM

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has vehemently countered Prime Minister Narendra Modi's accusations that the Congress government has 'looted' citizens in Karnataka to fund election campaigns in Maharashtra. Speaking at a press conference in Solapur, Maharashtra, Siddaramaiah demanded proof of Modi's claims and vowed to retire from politics if they were substantiated.

Describing Modi's statements as "blatant lies," he challenged the Prime Minister to accept his challenge.

"What is he afraid of?" Siddaramaiah asked, questioning Modi's commitment to address the allegations. He drew attention to the BJP's similar welfare promises in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, accusing them of hypocrisy. Siddaramaiah highlighted that while Karnataka contributes Rs 4.5 lakh crore annually in central taxes, it receives only Rs 60,000 crore in return, and urged Maharashtra's BJP leaders to verify facts in Karnataka.*—PTI*

The act was discovered by locals who arrived to offer prayers on Friday **PHOTO: SALAR**

CITY BOY VANDALISES IDOL AFTER FAILING EXAM, HELD

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

A minor boy was apprehended by police in Jeevan Bhima Nagar for allegedly vandalising a Bhuvaneshwari Devi idol by covering it in black paint. The act was discovered by locals who arrived to offer prayers on Friday morning, leading to a swift police response. Surveillance footage captured the boy approaching the idol on Thursday night and defacing it.

The officials later traced the boy's whereabouts and brought him in for questioning. According to police sources, the boy is reportedly grappling with mental health issues and expressed distress over failing to pass his supplementary class 10 examinations, despite several attempts. The investigation is ongoing, with police looking into the circumstances surrounding this alarming act of vandalism. *—Salar News*

BUSY WEEKEND

Traffic congestion was reported in Bengaluru's International Airport Road on Sunday caused by the Krishi Mela at GKVK and a bike show held at an open space nearby; Crowds flock to Krishi Mela at GKVK in Hebbal in large numbers on Sunday **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD**

HDK slams State over land survey delay

KOLAR, 17 NOV

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy has publicly denounced the State Forest Department for neglecting to conduct a joint survey regarding the alleged encroachment of land by former Speaker Ramesh Kumar in Srinivasapur taluk. Addressing reporters, Kumaraswamy claimed that while the department swiftly reclaimed thousands of acres from impoverished farmers without allowing them an opportunity to counter the accusations, officials have offered vague excuses for postponing the joint survey.

Kumaraswamy directed his ire towards Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, criticising him for focusing on minor issues, such as the ownership of HMT land, while neglecting the pressing matter of reclaiming land allegedly seized unlawfully by Ramesh Kumar in Jingalakunte village. He questioned why a scheduled joint survey on 6 October had been postponed when it hindered farmers from harvesting their crops.

HD Kumaraswamy **PHOTO: PTI**

The Minister also expressed his displeasure towards Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda for allegedly supporting Ramesh Kumar in this matter.

Regarding the issue of permanent employment for contract workers at BEML in KGF, Kumaraswamy explained that regulations prevent the conversion of these roles to permanent positions. He criticized the State Government's decision to convert over 11 lakh Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards to Above Poverty Line (APL) status, warning that this would place financial burdens on many vulnerable families reliant on ration shops. *— Salar News*

'SCHEMES UPLIFT POOR'

DKS defends 5 schemes amid criticism

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday hit back at criticism of Karnataka's flagship welfare guarantee schemes, accusing critics of being "unkind, ill-informed, and misleading," and showing insensitivity to the State's poor and marginalised communities.

Shivakumar's remarks come amid mounting Opposition from BJP, which has accused Congress-led State government of plunging Karnataka into financial distress. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other BJP leaders have repeatedly claimed that the State is on the verge of bankruptcy due to the financial burden of the programmes.

Addressing these concerns, Shivakumar pointed out that the government had allocated Rs 56,000 crore for the welfare schemes in the State's 2024-25 budget, which amounts to just 15 per cent of the total budget of Rs 3.71 lakh crore. "The expenditure on these programmes is well within the State's financial capacity, and we have ensured full transparency in the way funds are disbursed, with direct benefits reaching those who need them the most," he said

The five flagship programmes are Shakti, Gruha Lakshmi, Gruha Jyothi, Yuvanidhi, and Anna Bhagya.

He claims Shakti, which offers free bus travel for women and transgenders, has seen over 326 crore free rides, costing the state Rs 8,000 crore. Shivakumar described the scheme as a "lifeline" for women, enabling them to access education, healthcare, and social spaces more easily.

Karnataka's Gross State Domestic Product grew by 10.2 per cent in 2023-24, surpassing the national average of 8.2 per cent. Additionally, the State saw a 10 per cent increase in GST collections in the first half of 2024 and is now the second-largest contributor to India's direct tax revenue, behind only Maharashtra," he added.

"The critics who claim that our welfare spending will stifle economic growth are clearly overlooking the facts," Shivakumar said. "Karnataka's economy is resilient, and the welfare schemes are helping to create economic dynamism at the grassroots level." *—Salar News*

- The five flagship programmes are Shakti, Gruha Lakshmi, Gruha Jyothi, Yuvanidhi, and Anna Bhagya.

Woman alleges rape by ex on pretext of marriage

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

A woman from the city has accused her former boyfriend of raping her on the pretext of marriage, leading her to file a complaint with the Madiwala police against Nihal Hussain, whom she claims to have met through a dating app in March.

According to the allegations, the accused invited the victim to join him for a party at a private hotel. During the event, he allegedly offered her a juice that was laced with alcohol and subsequently raped her.

The victim's complaint further states that when she discovered she was pregnant, the accused coerced her into undergoing an abortion in May.

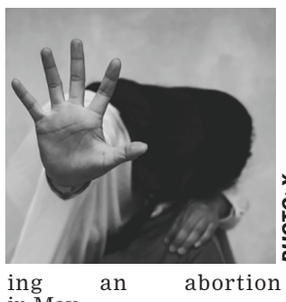


PHOTO: X

Speaking to Salar News on Sunday evening, representatives from the Madiwala police stated that they are investigating the matter from various angles. Sources have also revealed that police have identified a similar case filed by the same woman against another individual in 2023. *—Salar News*

UNEASY CALM IN MANIPUR AMID CURFEW

Funeral of 10 Kuki-Zo youths on hold till receipt of autopsy reports; internet still suspended

IMPHAL, 17 NOV

The situation remained calm but tense in Manipur's Imphal Valley, where an indefinite curfew has been imposed and internet services suspended following violent protests after the discovery of the bodies of six persons, three women and children each, allegedly abducted and killed by militants in Jiribam.

The six people were missing from a camp for the displaced in Jiribam since Monday following a gunfight between militants and security forces that led to the deaths of 10 insurgents.

Piles of debris remained on the roads of state capital Imphal on Sunday morning, a day after protestors staged violent protests over the deaths, attacking the residences of three state ministers and six MLAs.

Curfew was imposed for an indefinite period in Imphal East and West, Bishnupur, Thoubal and Kakching districts of Imphal valley "due to developing law and order situation", he said.

Security personnel patrol a sensitive area of Manipur. Search operations and area domination were conducted by security forces in the fringe and vulnerable areas of hill and valley districts of the state **PHOTO: PTI**

The state administration suspended internet services temporarily in seven districts in the wake of protesters storming the residences of state ministers and MLAs, another official said.

At Keisampat Bridge, tear gas shells were fired to disperse protesters who were attempting to march towards several buildings, including Raj Bhavan, and the secretariat, police said.

Funeral of 10 Kuki-Zo youths on hold till receipt of autopsy reports

The funeral of 10 Kuki-Zo youths, who were killed in an alleged gunfight with CRPF, will not be conducted till their post-mortem reports were handed over to the families, a leading organisation representing the community said on Sunday.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), a key organisation of the Kuki-Zo community in Manipur, has convened an emergency meeting to decide its future course of action regarding the funeral of the 10 people, killed in Jiribam.

"Today, we will have a meeting on how to proceed with the funeral. We have not received the post-mortem examination documents yet. Without those, we cannot touch the bodies because if we tamper with the bodies, there could be some legality issues," ITLF spokesperson Ginza Vualzong told PTI. *—PTI*

BJP deliberately wants Manipur to burn, says Cong's Kharge

New Delhi, 17 Nov

As fresh violence erupted in Manipur, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday alleged the ruling party deliberately wants the border state to burn as "it serves their hateful divisive politics".

PHOTO: PTI

Kharge said the people of state will never forgive or forget that Prime Minister Narendra Modi left them to fend for themselves and never set foot in their state to heal their miseries. "@narendramodi ji, Under your double engine governments, 'neither Manipur is one, nor is Manipur Safe'," the Congress president said in a post on X. "We are saying it with utmost responsibility that it looks that the BJP deliberately wants Manipur to burn, for it serves its hateful divisive politics," he said. Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also termed the recent string of violent clashes and continuing bloodshed in Manipur "deeply disturbing". *—PTI*

Thorat hints at CM ambitions

SHIRDI, 17 NOV

Senior Congress leader and Maharashtra assembly poll candidate Balasaheb Thorat has asserted that the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will win a clear majority and also indicated his chief ministerial aspirations.

In an exclusive interview to PTI ahead of 20 November state assembly polls, Thorat (71) said he is among the few senior leaders in the MVA after NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar and enjoys cordial relations with leaders of the alliance.

Thorat's assertion has come at a time when the ruling Mahayuti coalition has been

Balasaheb Thorat **PHOTO: PTI**

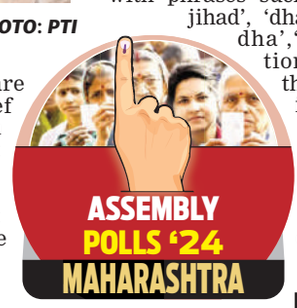
reluctant to declare incumbent Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as the next CM, with BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis saying a decision on it will be taken after the poll results are announced.

"Our first and foremost agenda is to get rid of the Mahayuti government that is neck deep in corruption," he claimed.

Maharashtra assembly polls campaign, which started on issues like welfare initiatives and development, has reached its crescendo with phrases such as 'vote jihad', 'dharma yuddha','Constitution under threat' dominating the discourse. The campaign, set to conclude on Monday, also saw NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray make an emotional pitch to voters, citing the "betrayal" by Ajit Pawar and Eknath Shinde, respectively.

Meanwhile, an independent candidate contesting the Maharashtra assembly election has made an unusual appeal that slippers be banned near polling booths in his constituency in Dharashiv, citing that they were his poll symbol and wearing them would be a violation of election code.

Gurudas Kamble, a candidate from the Paranda seat, has sought to ban "chappals" around polling booths. *—PTI*



Calling a fight between two political parties 'yudh' is not right. But since 'vote jihad' is being openly advocated, it must be countered by the Hindu society without hesitation

-Swami Govinddev Giri, Treasurer of Ram Temple

Devendra Fadnavis has given a call for 'dharma-yudh' of votes. I am asking the Election Commission, does dharma-yudh fit in with your model code of conduct?

-Uddhav Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief

Maharashtra has been deprived of jobs due to the shifting of Foxconn, Airbus projects to Gujarat

-Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress General Secy

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar's bags were checked by the poll personnel at Baramati helipad in Maharashtra's Pune district on Sunday morning, according to his associate. The issue of poll officials checking politicians' luggage entered electoral discourse after Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray recently filmed his bags being inspected and shared the video of it. **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

EX-BJP MP RANA ATTACKED; 45 BOOKED, 3 DETAINED

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

Former BJP MP Navneet Rana and her supporters were allegedly attacked by a group of people when she arrived for a public meeting in Maharastra's Amravati district, police said on Sunday.

The police have registered a first information report (FIR) against 45 people and detained three of them in connection with the incident that occurred at Khallar village on Saturday night, an official said.

Amravati (Rural) Superintendent of Police Vishal Anand said, "Rana arrived with her supporters to attend a public meeting around 10pm when some persons from the crowd allegedly used objectionable words and made lewd gestures at her."

Her supporters clashed with the accused in the crowd, and chairs were thrown at the BJP leader and her entourage, he said, adding that no one was injured in the incident.

The official said Rana later reached a nearby police station and lodged the complaint.

Anand said, "We have registered an FIR under sections of rioting, attempt to murder and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Five people have been named, while 40 were unidentified. Three people have been detained." *— PTI*

THACKERAY'S LEGACY

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray were among the leaders who paid homage to Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray on his 12th death anniversary **PHOTO: PTI**

India slams COP29 over deadlock on key issues

BAKU, 17 NOV

PHOTO: X

At COP29 in Baku, India expressed frustration with developed countries for not seriously discussing how to support climate action in developing nations, saying it is impossible to tackle climate change without financial and technological help.

Delivering a statement in the closing plenary of the subsidiary bodies' meeting on the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) on Saturday, India said developed countries, which have historically contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions and have more resources and the ability to act on climate change, have repeatedly delayed climate action and continuously shifted goalposts.

"We have seen no progress in matters critical for developing countries (during the last week). Our part of the world is facing some of the worst impacts of climate change with far lower capacity to recover from those impacts or to adapt to the changes to the climatic system for which we are not responsible," said India's deputy lead negotiator Neelesh Sah.

He said the MWP is meant to help, not punish, and must respect each country's right to set its own climate goals based on its unique needs and circumstances.

At COP29, countries are discussing how the MWP -- created two years ago at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to help support mitigation -- should work and what it should focus on.

On the other hand, developed countries want the MWP to push for stronger, more immediate action from all countries.

With climate impacts worsening, developing countries need at least USD 1.3 trillion every year in financial support.

Negotiators are now looking for a strong signal from G20 heads of governments who will meet at Rio De Janeiro in Brazil on 18-19 November. *—PTI*

Tension prevails in Kozhikode during UDF hartal

KOZHIKODE, 17 NOV

Minor skirmishes were reported during the Congress-led UDF's dawn-to-dusk hartal in Kozhikode on Sunday, held in protest against the clashes that broke out during the Chevayur Service Cooperative Bank election here. According to the sources with the police, tension escalated after the hartal supporters attempted to block private buses and shut shops forcibly on Mavoor Road and private bus stand premises in the city. Tension prevailed on Mavoor road during a march taken out by Youth Congress after the protesters engaged in an altercation with the police, sources added. As per the visuals aired by television channels, altercations broke out between bus workers, shopkeepers, and protesters as the latter tried to halt services forcibly. The police reportedly had to resort to a lathi charge to separate the two groups. Subsequently, in protest against the action, about 50 party leaders in Kozhikode resigned from Congress. *—PTI*

M'rashtra polls: Cash, goods worth Rs 27.6 cr seized

THANE, 17 NOV

The authorities have seized cash, liquor and other contraband worth Rs 27.68 crore from 18 constituencies in Thane district since the code of conduct came into force for 20 November state polls, an official said on Sunday. As per a release issued by the district administration, the authorities have seized Rs 15.59 crore cash, liquor worth Rs 3.01 crore, narcotics worth Rs 1.79 crore, jewellery and valuables worth Rs 23.26 lakh, and materials valued at Rs 7.05 crore meant for free distribution since the code of conduct was enforced on 15 October. Static Surveillance Teams (SSTs) and flying squads intercepted vehicles and conducted inspections. *—PTI*

J'khand CM defamation: 2 accounts booked

RANCHI, 17 NOV

Jharkhand Police have registered FIRs against operators of two social media accounts for allegedly running campaigns to malign the image of Chief Minister Hemant Soren and that of the state, a senior officer said. The FIRs were registered after Soren and the ruling JMM accused BJP of running "shadow" campaigns to malign the image of the CM and the state. Soren had alleged that the saffron camp has been "spending crores of rupees on various social media platforms" and "created 95,000 WhatsApp groups" to campaign against the JMM-led coalition in the state. The JMM had also taken up the matter with the Election Commission. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

M'rashtra ops: 9 Kashmiris held, rifles seized

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

Nine Kashmiris were arrested in a joint operation of Ahilyanagar (formerly Ahmednagar) police in Maharashtra and Military Intelligence, Sothern Command and nine rifles as well as 58 live cartridges were allegedly seized from them, an official said on Sunday. The probe began after reliable information was received about some persons hailing from Jammu and Kashmir taking up jobs as security guards in cities in Maharashtra and carrying weapons with fake licences, the official said. Raids led to nine persons being arrested in Ahilyanagar with nine 12-bore rifles and 58 bullets, the official said. A case was registered at Tofkhana police station. *—PTI*

PROMISES DELIVERED

Omar's govt tackles key issues in 1st month

SRINAGAR, 17 NOV

Improving the quality of life and addressing pressing issues such as growing unemployment have been the focus of the Omar Abdullah-led government in Jammu and Kashmir in its first month, a senior government functionary said.

Since taking charge, the government introduced several measures besides getting an additional 300 MW of power supply to alleviate electricity shortages that have plagued the Union Territory, particularly during the harsh winter months.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah took oath as the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir on 16 October, heading the first elected government in the Union territory since 2019 when its special status was revoked.

Shortly after assuming office, he instructed the police to refrain from establishing 'green corridors' for his movement, a decision aimed at minimising disruptions caused by VIP traffic and to prioritise the convenience of the public.

In a significant policy shift, the Abdullah government also announced that the academic sessions for students up to Class 9 in Jammu and Kashmir will revert to the November-December timeline, replacing the previously adopted March session following persistent requests from parents and students, particularly in the winter zones of the region.

The party had committed to enacting the Jammu and Kashmir Youth Employment Generation Act within the first three months of forming the government. This act aims to create sustainable employment opportunities for the youth, ensure the filling of all vacancies in government departments within 180 days, and establish a solid policy for future employment generation. *— PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Modi 1st PM in Nigeria after 17 yrs

ABUJA, 17 NOV

India accords high priority to its strategic partnership with Nigeria and it will work towards boosting ties in a range of areas, including defence, energy and trade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during his talks with Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Sunday.

In his televised opening remarks at the meeting, Modi identified terrorism, separatism, piracy and drug trafficking as major challenges and said the two countries will continue to work together to deal with them.

Modi arrived in Abuja early Sunday on the first trip to the country by an Indian prime minister after a gap of 17 years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being conferred with Nigeria's second-highest national award Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger by President of Nigeria Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

"We give high priority to our strategic partnership with Nigeria...I am confident that a new chapter in our ties will begin following talks." *—PTI*

No land for Haryana Assembly yet in Chandigarh: Guv

CHANDIGARH, 17 NOV

Amid strong protests by different political outfits against the Centre over land allotment to Haryana government for constructing a new Assembly building in Chandigarh, Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria on Sunday said that no land has been allocated for the purpose yet.

"No land has been allotted yet. Their (Haryana's) proposal is pending for a long time. But nothing can be said until a decision is made in this matter," Kataria said while responding to a query on the sidelines of an event here. *—PTI*

Hoax threat call to RBI customer care, case filed

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

A hoax threat call was received by the customer care department of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in Maharashtra's Mumbai, police said on Sunday. According to officials, the Mumbai police have registered a case regarding the same and have initiated a probe into the same. Further details are awaited —*ANI*

PHOTO: X

Diljit tweaks songs at Hyderabad show

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Punjabi star Diljit Dosanjh modified lyrics of his chartbusters "Lemonade" and "5 Taara" at the Hyderabad show of his Dil-Luminati India Tour 2024 on Saturday. The Telangana government had issued a notice, directing him to not sing any songs promoting alcohol, drugs or violence at the concert. He was also restricted from using children on stage. Clips of the singer-actor from the gig are circulating online where he can be seen singing "Tainu Teri Coke Ch Pasand Aa Lemonade" instead of "Tainu Teri Daaru Ch Pasand Aa Lemonade". Similarly, the lyrics in "5 Taara" became "5 Taara Hotel Ch" in "5 Taara Theke Utte". Diljit said about the notice, "God is with me, I won't let this go." —*PTI*

Tempo crushes man, drags him to death in Surat road rage

SURAT, 17 NOV

A 56-year-old man was crushed to death and dragged by a tempo after he argued with the vehicle's driver over his rash driving in Gujarat's Surat city, police said on Sunday. The accused driver, Mayur Mer, 39, was arrested within hours as the CCTV footage of the accident showed the tempo running over the victim and dragging him even as his son tried to get the enraged driver to stop the vehicle, an official said. He said the victim, Jitendra Kanthariya, and his son were waiting at a traffic signal when the tempo hit their motorcycle. The duo had a heated argument and when the victim got off the two-wheeler and approached the tempo driver, the latter crushed him and dragged him for around 15 feet before escaping. The accused claimed in a statement that the father-son duo had tried to assault him for driving rashly, and when he tried to escape, one of them stood in front of the vehicle, he said —*PTI*

5 killed, 7 injured in 2 road accidents in MP

KHARGONE/ MORENA, 17 NOV

Five people were killed and seven others injured in two separate road accidents in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone and Morena districts, police said on Sunday. A sports utility vehicle (SUV) and a van collided near the PWD office in Khargone city at around 7am on Sunday, Khargone Kotwali police station's sub-inspector Shriram Bhuria said. Two van occupants, identified as Ramlal, 50, and Shobharam, 49, died on the spot. Five others travelling in the van were injured, he said. Meanwhile, in Morena, three people were killed and two others seriously injured in a collision between two speeding motorcycles on Saturday night, police said. Two motorcycle riders, Bishu, 65, and Sachin, 22, died on the spot while another person named Santosh, 28, died during treatment, he said. Two others were injured seriously and referred to the district hospital in Morena from Sabalgarh's government hospital, the official said. —*PTI*

SC flags Delhi's abysmal solid waste management

Delhi's 11K tonnes waste surpasses 8K tonnes capacity

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Supreme Court has flagged the "complete failure" of agencies in implementing the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in the national capital and directed the chief secretary of the Delhi government to call a meeting of all stakeholders to discuss the issue.

The apex court observed it is a matter of immense importance that the 2016 Rules are implemented in their true letter and spirit in the capital city.

"If we find that all other authorities do not come together and tell us the time-bound schedule for implementation of the 2016 Rules, the court may have to consider of passing harsh orders," a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih said in its order passed on 11 November. The bench said, "We direct the chief secretary of the Delhi Government to call a meeting of all the stakeholders, including the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, to discuss the issue of implementation of the 2016 Rules".

Supreme Court has flagged the 'complete failure' of agencies in implementing the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 PHOTO: PTI

- The apex court observed it is a matter of immense importance that the 2016 Rules are implemented in their true letter and spirit in the capital city

It said all stakeholders must come together and file a common report before the court laying down the time-lines for reporting compliance with the provisions of the 2016 Rules. The issue of solid waste management in Delhi-NCR has cropped up before the apex court which is hearing a matter related to pollution in the national capital and adjoining areas.

The apex court had slammed the MCD over the "sorry state of affairs" and said that the national capital generates over 11,000 tonnes of solid waste per day, while the daily capacity of processing plants was only 8,073 tonnes. —*PTI*

Delhi 2nd-most polluted city in India; AQ 'severe'

Delhi's air quality worsened further on Sunday, with an AQI of 441, making it the second-most polluted city in the country. The city's 24-hour Air Quality Index (AQI), recorded at 4 pm daily, stood at 441, in the "severe" category. On Saturday, the AQI was 417.According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), a "severe" AQI poses risks to healthy individuals and severely impacts those with pre-existing health conditions. Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea seeking enforcement measures to curb air pollution.

FAMILY SUSPECTS FOUL PLAY

Dead man's eye goes missing in Bihar, hospital blames rats

PATNA, 17 NOV

One eye of a man who was shot at was found missing hours after his death at a state-run hospital in the Bihar capital, with doctors blaming rats for gnawing it and the deceased's family members suspecting foul play.

Fantush Kumar, who was admitted to Nalanda Medical College and Hospital (NMCH) in Patna after being shot at by unknown assailants on 15 November, succumbed to his injuries on Friday night.

His body was kept on the ICU bed as post-mortem examination could not be conducted at night. The autopsy was conducted on Saturday morning.

The family members alleged negligence and foul play, while some doctors suspected that rats might have gnawed the eye.

Speaking to reporters, NMCH medical superintendent Binod Kumar Singh said, "A medical team has been constituted to probe the matter. It's a serious issue and strict action must be taken against those found guilty."

Fantush Kumar PHOTO: PTI

"A group of doctors suspect that rats might have gnawed the eye. All aspects pertaining to the incident are being probed. We are also waiting for the autopsy report," he said.

"How the eye was gouged out can only be known after receiving the autopsy report. The hospital administration has also lodged a formal complaint with the Alamganj police station in this regard," the medical superintendent said.Family members of the deceased have not lodged any complaint so far —*PTI*

Gujarat ragging: Student dies after standing for 3hrs

PATAN, 17 NOV

An 18-year-old MBBS student of a medical college in Gujarat's Patan district died after allegedly after being made to stand for three hours during ragging by his seniors, an official said Sunday.

The college has started a probe into the incident which took place on Saturday.

The deceased, who apparently fell unconscious after being made to stand for a long time, was a first year MBBS student at the college.

The victim, Anil Methaniya, fell unconscious and died allegedly after being made to stand for three hours during ragging by his seniors at a hostel of the GMERS Medical College and Hospital at Dharpur in Patan on Saturday night, the college dean, Dr Hardik Shah, said.

He said the anti-ragging committee of the college has initiated a probe into the matter, and punitive measures will be taken against the senior students if they are found responsible for ragging.

The student's body was sent for postmortem and a case of accidental death was registered, an official from Balisana police station said.

PHOTO: PTI

A first-year medical student at the college said seven-eight senior students forced a group of juniors to stand for around three hours and introduce themselves one by one.

"They forced us to keep standing and asked us not to get agitated. At last, a student, who was also standing with us, fell unconscious. We rushed him to a hospital where he died," he said on condition of anonymity. —*PTI*

UP STUDENTS' STIR: 4 TELEGRAM CHANNELS BOOKED

HYDERABAD, 17 NOV

In a remarkable achievement, fine variety paddy (sanna vadlu) cultivation in Telangana has gone up by 61 per cent to four million acres this kharif season, compared to 2.5 million acres during the same period last year, government sources said on Sunday.

The reason for this increase in the acreage (fine paddy) is attributed to the Rs 500 bonus per quintal for the fine variety paddy announced by the Congress government in the state as part of its poll promise, sources said.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy complimented farmers and said that for the first time after the formation of Telangana state, despite the Kaleshwaram Project not being in a position to store water, paddy was harvested at a record level.

The total paddy production stood at 15.3 million tons against 14.6 million tons last year. —*PTI*

PROPERTY DISPUTE

7 injured in Shimla temple clash

SHIMLA, 17 NOV

Seven people, including three police personnel, were injured in a clash between some members of the Himalayan Brahmo Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram in Shimla, police said on Sunday.

The building of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, located within the Brahmo Samaj property near the Vidhan Sabha, was also damaged in the conflict, they said.

Around 100 people, including elderly women associated with the Himalayan Brahmo Samaj, peacefully entered the ashram premises on Saturday evening to perform prayers, Shimla Superintendent of Police (SP) Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi.

The group tried to continue their prayers into the night but the members of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, who are in possession of the premises, objected, Gandhi said.

Anticipating a possible takeover attempt, as there was an ongoing dispute over the ownership of the property reportedly worth crores of rupees, the ashram authorities called the police for assistance, said ashram office bearers.

Police personnel investigate following a dispute between two Hindu groups in Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, in Shimla, on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

Gandhi said police tried to mediate and resolve the matter. However, when the Himalayan Brahmo Samaj followers agreed to leave but insisted that they be allowed to perform prayers on Sunday, people gathered near the ashram started pelting stones at them. Seven people, including three police personnel, were injured, he said.

Two FIRs have been registered against seven people, police said.

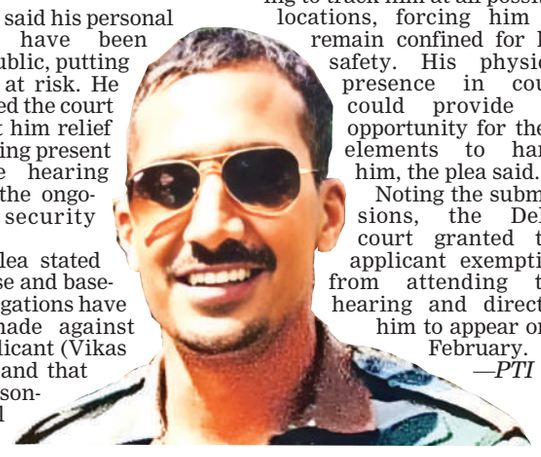
Swami Tanmahimanand, the secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, said the property was handed over to the ashram by the Brahmo Samaj for religious purposes and that the mission has been operating there since 2014. —*PTI*

Pannun case accused Vikas seeks court relief

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Vikash Yadav, accused of attempting to murder Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in the United States, has been granted relief by a Delhi court from attending his case hearing.

Yadav said his personal details have been made public, putting his life at risk. He has asked the court to grant him relief from being present for the hearing due to the ongoing security threat.



The plea stated that false and baseless allegations have been made against the applicant (Vikas Yadav) and that his personal details, such as his address, background, and photographs, have been widely circulated globally, thereby exposing him to a threat to his life.

The plea further stated that the applicant was being relentlessly monitored by hostile elements, who were attempting to track him at all possible locations, forcing him to remain confined for his safety. His physical presence in court could provide an opportunity for these elements to harm him, the plea said.

Noting the submissions, the Delhi court granted the applicant exemption from attending the hearing and directed him to appear on 3 February. —*PTI*

The total paddy production stood at 15.3 million tons against 14.6 million tons last year PHOTO: PTI

Paddy cultivation in Telangana up 61%

HYDERABAD, 17 NOV

In a remarkable achievement, fine variety paddy (sanna vadlu) cultivation in Telangana has gone up by 61 per cent to four million acres this kharif season, compared to 2.5 million acres during the same period last year, government sources said on Sunday.

The reason for this increase in the acreage (fine paddy) is attributed to the Rs 500 bonus per quintal for the fine variety paddy announced by the Congress government in the state as part of its poll promise, sources said.

"The state government had announced the Rs 500 bonus on the minimum support price (MSP) on the fine variety paddy from this season. As a result, the cultivation area of sanna vadlu has increased by 61 per cent, compared to last year," they said.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy complimented farmers and said that for the first time after the formation of Telangana state, despite the Kaleshwaram Project not being in a position to store water, paddy was harvested at a record level.

The total paddy production stood at 15.3 million tons against 14.6 million tons last year. —*PTI*

BLACKOUT HITS TN HOSPITAL, POWER RESTORED LATER

CHENNAI, 17 NOV

A sudden power outage at the Kalaignar Centenary Super Specialty Hospital, Guindy, here, purportedly due to an electrical short circuit on late Saturday night left the patients and their attendants in shock.

A senior government official, however, said the power supply was restored.

Additional Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu Health department Supriya Sahu said there was a fire accident in the main cable at the hospital, impacting the power supply in the KCSSH.

The KCSSH has been in the news for wrong reasons in the past few days.

The hospital witnessed a shocking incident of a senior oncologist getting stabbed by a patient's son on 13 November. —*PTI*

PLAYING BEST MAN

Rly holds up train for 'baraat' party

KOLKATA, 17 NOV

A Mumbai man managed to reach Guwahati on time to marry his lady love on Sunday, thanks to the help from railways that detained a connecting train in Howrah station and shifted the wedding guests to another train on battery-operated vehicles.

The incident took place on Friday after Chandrasekhar Wagh, a member of a 34-strong baraat party (relatives accompanying the groom) coming from Mumbai, pleaded helplessness on X to the Railway authorities. The Mumbai–Howrah Gitanjali Express, which was scheduled to arrive in Howrah at 1.05pm, got delayed and they feared they would miss the Howrah–Guwahati Saraighat Express, which was scheduled to depart from Howrah station around 4 pm. Following the post of Chandrashekhar D Wagh on X, the Howrah Divisional Railway Manager received an urgent message from higher authorities to do the needful, a senior official of the Eastern Railways told PTI.

The incident took place on Friday after Chandrasekhar Wagh, a member of a 34-strong baraat party, pleaded helplessness PHOTO: X

Officials decided to delay the departure of Saraighat Express and ensured swift arrival of Gitanjali Express. —*PTI*

Alert loco pilot averts major mishap

The loco pilot of a goods train averted a major accident by applying the emergency brakes after spotting an iron garter and cement posts on the tracks near the Dibnapur railway station, officials said on Sunday. uperintendent of Police (North) Mukesh Chandra Mishra said the incident occurred Friday night in Hafizganj area. —*PTI*

Activists urge Bihar govt to check animal sacrifices

PATNA, 17 NOV

Former Union minister Maneka Gandhi and a few animal rights activists have urged the Nitish Kumar government in Bihar to issue immediate directions to check the "regressive practice of animal sacrifice" in various parts of the state.

They also requested the Bihar government to stop the illegal transportation of cattle from the state to Nepal for sacrifice in the upcoming Gadhimai festival in the neighbouring country.

Gandhi wrote a letter to the Bihar chief minister on Friday seeking his immediate intervention "to stop animal sacrifice in the state and also illegal transportation of cows, buffaloes, goats, pigeons from Bihar to Nepal, primarily intended for sacrifice, especially around the Gadhimai festival".

Maneka Gandhi PHOTO: PTI

It has been recently reported that around Rs 1 crore worth of Indian buffaloes alone are smuggled monthly and sold in Nepal's markets, she wrote in her letter. —*PTI*

73RD MISS UNIVERSE 2024

Miss Denmark Victoria Kjær Theilvig, 21, receives the crown after winning the 73rd Miss Universe Beauty Pageant in Mexico City, on Saturday
PHOTO: PTI

Russia escalates Ukraine conflict after 1,000 days

Tens of thousands of soldiers from both countries have been killed since 2022 ***PHOTO: PTI***

When Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine in February 2022, the conventional wisdom was that the capital, Kyiv, would soon fall and the rest of the country wouldn't last long against a much larger enemy.

Instead, it was that narrative that quickly collapsed. The Ukrainian army proved it could slow the advance of Russia's forces and, if not drive them out completely, then – with enough support from the West – at least forestall defeat.

But nearly three years later, the outlook is again grim. Russia is expending huge amounts of weaponry and human life to make small-but-steady territorial gains to the nearly one-fifth of Ukraine it already controls. Ukraine, meanwhile, is struggling to minimize losses, maintain morale and convince allies that, with more military aid, it can turn the tide.

As this brutal war of attrition grinds toward its 1,000th day, neither side seems eager to negotiate. President-elect Donald Trump has said he could quickly end the war, though it is unclear how or in whose favour he might tip the scales.

For Ukraine, the key to any cease-fire would be guarantees from the West that it won't allow Russia to re-invade in the future. Otherwise, O'Brien said, "a cease-fire is a recipe for constant instability in Europe".

Russia is advancing slowly but steadily in eastern Ukraine

In the war's first year, Ukraine lost huge amounts of territory — but it also achieved notable victories. It resisted a much larger adversary with superior air power to survive as an independent country, and it reclaimed some land through gutsy counteroffensives, giving the underdog — and its wealthy allies — the confidence to stay in the fight.

With Ukraine's ammunition dwindling, its outlook deteriorated significantly as the war's third year began. In February 2024, the town of Avdiivka fell after months of airstrikes by Russia, which used highly destructive Soviet-era bombs retrofitted with navigation systems.

A bright spot for Ukraine came in August, when it launched a surprise incursion into Russia. It took — and still holds — hundreds of square kilometers in the Kursk region. While this could be an important chip in any cease-fire negotiations, it hasn't stopped Russian forces from taking more land in Ukraine's east.

Tens of thousands of soldiers from both countries have been killed since the start of the war in 2022, according to estimates, and the UN says at least 11,700 Ukrainian civilians have been killed.

While the amount of land Russia has gained in 2024 — about 2,455 square kilometers (948 square miles)— is equal to less than 1 per cent of Ukraine's pre-war territory, it is having a psychological impact.

A war of attrition requires both sides to seek outside resources

To keep its war machine going, Russia — like Ukraine — has turned to allies for help.

Iran supplies Russia with drones and possibly missiles, and North Korea has sent ammunition — and even troops, who have been deployed to Russia's Kursk region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed this year that 700,000 of his troops are fighting in Ukraine. Analysts say Putin would need a much larger force to accelerate Russia's advance, but that he is unlikely to mobilize more troops because it could stoke internal discontent.

Ukraine's foothold in Kursk is another complicating factor for Putin, and it could be used as a bargaining chip in any future cease-fire negotiations.

Captain Yevhen Karas, a Ukrainian commander in Kursk, said the fighting inside Russia is highly dynamic, but he believes it will prove effective in diverting Russia's attention and resources.

Ukraine has asked the West for longer range missiles and its blessing to fire at air bases deep inside Russia. But its allies have so far resisted, wary of escalating tensions with a nuclear-armed Russia.

The US will play a vital role in determining the war's next direction

What direction the war takes next will depend in large part on how the incoming Trump administration plays its hand.

Trump, who has touted his good relationship with President Vladimir Putin and called the Russian leader "pretty smart" for invading Ukraine, has repeatedly criticized American backing of Ukraine.

During his only campaign debate with Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump twice refused to directly answer a question about whether he wanted Ukraine to win — raising concerns that Kyiv could be forced to accept unfavourable terms in any negotiations.

Without security guarantees from the West, Ukraine could find itself vulnerable to future Russian aggression. Analysts say a cease-fire based on the current state of the battlefield would set a dangerous precedent, implying that Europe's borders are up for grabs through military action — something that hasn't happened since World War II. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈا

COP29 week one stalls amid sharp divisions

The first week of the COP29 summit concluded in Baku without significant breakthroughs, as deep divisions between developed and developing nations stalled progress on key issues like climate finance, trade measures, and equitable responsibility for climate action.

India, representing the G-77/China and BASIC blocs, demanded accountability from wealthier countries on unmet financial commitments.

The G-77/China bloc reiterated the call for USD 1.3 trillion annually in climate finance, with an emphasis on grants and concessional funding to avoid burdening vulnerable economies already grappling with the impacts of climate change.

"Loans make up nearly 70 per cent of climate finance provided so far. This is unacceptable and places undue pressure on developing economies," an Indian negotiator had asserted, urging developed nations to move away from debt-inducing mechanisms.

UN Executive Secretary Simon Stiell added to the urgency, urging G20 countries to take bolder action, warning that without it, no economy in the grouping would be spared from climate-driven economic losses.

However, his call for solidarity failed to resolve the deadlock.

Cosima Castle, of E3G's climate diplomacy team, acknowledged the challenges posed by geopolitical tensions but underscored the potential of the upcoming G20 Leaders' Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

E3G is an engineering and environmental consulting firm.

"We're seeing strains everywhere, from the Middle East to Africa to Ukraine, yet there's collective resolve among many nations to work toward a deal," she said.

Castle pointed out that the G20 countries, responsible for 80 per cent of global emissions and 85 per cent of the world economy, hold the key to unlocking ambitious climate agreements.

India and other developing nations criticised the measure for disproportionately penalising their economies, calling it a violation of equity principles and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Technology transfer emerged as another unresolved issue.

Developing nations demanded a robust technology implementation programme supported by dedicated financial backing.

"Without equitable access to climate technologies, the promises of the Paris Agreement will remain unfulfilled," an Indian negotiator stated.

India also opposed any attempts to impose external regulations on its climate targets, emphasising that mitigation efforts should align with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national sovereignty.

The BASIC bloc criticised developed nations for attempting to dilute their commitments under the Paris Agreement by shifting additional obligations onto emerging economies.

The BASIC countries include Brazil, South Africa, India, and China.

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the Arab Group joined forces with India, highlighting the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable populations and demanding scaled-up financial and technological support.

The negotiations in Baku have also highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive climate finance package that addresses both mitigation and adaptation.

"The costs of inaction are far greater than the costs of action," Castle warned, adding that countries must come together not only for climate action but also for long-term economic stability.

South Africa, which will assume the G20 presidency in 2025, is expected to play a crucial role in bridging the gap between developed and developing countries.

Gillian Hamilton, a civil society leader from South Africa, emphasised the country's commitment to debt relief and reforms in multilateral financial systems.

"South Africa has been closely working with the African Union to reflect the priorities of the Global South, focusing on equity and solidarity," she said, adding that the country's leadership would build on themes introduced by Brazil and India.

The lack of progress on key fronts, including the long-standing USD 100 billion annual climate finance pledge, left developing nations increasingly frustrated.

As negotiators prepare for the second week, the stalemate casts uncertainty over whether COP29 will deliver actionable outcomes.

With COP30 in Brazil next year, the outcomes in Baku are likely to set the tone for the global climate agenda in the months to come. *—PTI*

India, representing the G-77/China and BASIC blocs, demanded accountability from wealthier countries on unmet financial commitments ***PHOTO: COP29***

Anxiety grows in justice department as Trump picks Gaetz for AG

Trump described Matt Gaetz as the right person to 'root out the systemic corruption within the agency, end weaponised government and restore Americans badly-shattered faith ***PHOTO: PTI***

Donald Trump's choice of Matt Gaetz to be attorney general has many Justice Department employees reeling, worried not only about their own jobs but the future of the agency that the Trump loyalist has railed against.

The president-elect's pick of the Florida Republican sent a shock throughout the Cabinet department, considering Gaetz's lack of experience in law enforcement and the fact that he was once the subject of a federal sex trafficking investigation.

The names of well-regarded veteran lawyers had circulated as possible contenders for the job but Gaetz's selection was broadly interpreted as an indication of the premium that Trump places on personal loyalty and Trump's desire to have a disruptor lead a department that for years investigated and ultimately indicted him.

Career lawyers at the department interviewed by AP, all of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity, described a widespread sense of being stunned by the nomination -- even outrage. They spoke of being flooded with calls and messages from colleagues as soon as the news broke.

Some inside the department were not immediately sure that Gaetz, who graduated law school in 2007 but has spent most of his career as a lawmaker, including in Congress, was even a lawyer. And some are already looking for new jobs as concerns grow over Gaetz's rhetoric about going after the "deep state".

Gaetz has claimed the department is "corrupt and highly political", and strongly criticised the federal prosecutions of Trump and 6 January rioters. He also has suggested abolishing two agencies he would oversee as attorney general, the FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. He would arrive in the job without the legal experience of his predecessors, including the current attorney general, Merrick Garland, who as a high-ranking Justice Department official supervised the prosecution of the Oklahoma City bombing case before becoming a federal appeals court judge.

Trump described Gaetz as the right person to "root out the systemic corruption" within the agency, end "weaponised" government and "restore Americans' badly-shattered faith and confidence in the Justice Department".

"I think he was picked to shake the whole thing and to throw a grenade into DOJ," said John Fishwick Jr, a former US attorney for the Western District of Virginia, who was nominated by Democratic President Barack Obama. "He's a flamethrower and that's what Trump wants."

Fishwick said Justice Department lawyers he has been in touch with are "concerned about what this is going to mean for them individually".

But one Justice Department lawyer was less bothered by the change, saying a leadership shakeup could be a welcome reset given the "mistrust from both the left and the right" that the attorney said was justified after a tumultuous stretch of politically charged investigations that have divided public opinion and put federal law enforcement on the defensive.

More recently, a special counsel was named to investigate President Joe Biden's handling of classified information, an inquiry that closed without charges, while a separate special counsel investigation into Trump's retention of top secret documents and efforts to overturn the 2020 election produced federal indictments against Trump that now are in line to be erased.

- Gaetz has claimed the department is "corrupt and highly political", and strongly criticised the federal prosecutions of Trump and 6 January rioters

It is unclear whether Gaetz has enough Republican support in the Senate to be confirmed. Some Republicans have praised his nomination but several have expressed concern or refused to say publicly yet whether they will support him. Trump has broached the possibility of bypassing the traditional confirmation process by pushing through his nominees while the Senate is in recess.

Gaetz faces continued scrutiny over a federal sex trafficking investigation that ended without criminal charges. Before his resignation from the House on Wednesday, he had been under investigation by the House Ethics Committee, which was examining whether he engaged in sexual misconduct and illicit drug use, accepted improper gifts and tried to obstruct government investigations of his conduct.

House Speaker Mike Johnson said on Friday that he will "strongly request" that the House committee not release the results of its investigation, rebuffing senators who are demanding access now that Gaetz has been picked for attorney general.

Gaetz has denied all the allegations.

Justice Department employees were already preparing for a major shakeup to the agency's agenda around civil rights and other matters before Trump settled on Gaetz to be the nation's top federal law enforcement officer.

Trump has been known to take a keen interest in the FBI and Justice Department, expecting loyalty from leaders and calling for specific actions.

Some career department lawyers leave for the private sector every time there is a new administration, but employees say there could be a dramatic departure of staff in the coming months.

"The department runs on career employees, people who are apolitical in work, and politics aside, if all of these people are so dismayed at the selection of the attorney general that they leave, who will carry out the functions of the department?" said one Justice Department lawyer, who is planning to leave the government. *—PTI*

Russia launches 90 drones, 120 missiles on Ukraine

Ukraine says the attack targeted its energy infrastructure

KYIV, 17 NOV

Russia on Sunday launched a massive drone and missile attack on Ukraine, described by officials as the largest over the past months, targeting energy infrastructure and killing civilians.

The attack came as fears are mounting about Moscow's intentions to devastate Ukraine's power generation capacity ahead of the cold winter.

Ukraie's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Russia had launched a total of 120 missiles and 90 drones in a large-scale attack across Ukraine. Various types of drones were deployed, he said, including Iranian-made Shaheds, as well as cruise, ballistic and aircraft-launched ballistic missiles.

Ukrainian defence forces shot down 140 air targets, Zelenskyy said in a statement on Telegram.

"The enemy's target was our energy infrastructure throughout Ukraine. Unfortunately, there is damage to objects from hits and falling debris. In Mykolaiv, as a result of a drone attack, two people were killed and six others were injured, including two children," Zelenskyy said.

The combined drone and missile attack was the most powerful in three months, according to the head of Kyiv's City Military Administration Serhii Popko.

Russian strikes have hammered Ukraine's power infrastructure since Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbor in February 2022, prompting repeated emergency power shutdowns and nationwide rolling blackouts. Ukrainian officials have routinely urged Western allies to bolster the country's air defences to counter assaults and allow for repairs.

Explosions were heard across Ukraine on Sunday, including in the capital, Kyiv, the key southern port of Odesa, as well as the country's west and central regions, according to local reports.

The operational command of Poland's armed forces wrote on X that Polish and allied aircraft, including fighter jets, have been mobilised in Polish airspace.

A thermal power plant operated by private energy company DTEK was "seriously damaged" Ukraine said in a statement on Telegram. —*PTI*

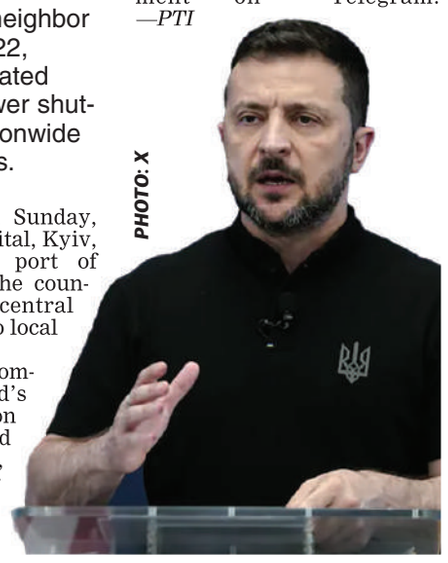


PHOTO: X

- Russian strikes have hammered Ukraine's power infrastructure since Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbor in February 2022, prompting repeated emergency power shutdowns and nationwide rolling blackouts.

12 KILLED IN GAZA

Israel's troops have advanced farther to the north in Lebanon **PHOTO: X**

3 arrested after flares near Netanyahu's home

TEL AVIV, 17 NOV

Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip overnight and into Sunday killed 12 people, according to Palestinian medical officials. Police in Israel, meanwhile, arrested three suspects after flares were fired at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's private residence in the coastal city of Caesarea.

The developments are the latest as the Israel's assault on Gaza and Lebanon grinds on with no end in sight. Israel's troops have advanced farther to the north in Lebanon.

Authorities said Netanyahu and his family were not at the residence when two flares were fired at it overnight, and there were no injuries. A drone launched by Hezbollah struck the residence last month, also when Netanyahu and his family were away.

The police did not provide details about the suspects behind the flares, but officials pointed to domestic political critics of Netanyahu. Israel's largely ceremonial president, Isaac Herzog, condemned the incident and warned against "an escalation of the violence in the public sphere." Netanyahu has faced months of mass protests over his handling of the hostage crisis.

Critics blame Netanyahu for the security and intelligence failures that allowed the 7 October attack to happen and for not reaching a deal with Hamas to release scores of hostages still held inside Gaza. Justice Minister Yariv Levin meanwhile seized on the flare attack to call for a revival of his plans to overhaul the Israeli judiciary, which had sparked months of mass protests before the war and remains deeply divisive. —*PTI*

Sri Lanka's new Cabinet to be sworn in on Monday

COLOMBO, 17 NOV

Sri Lanka's new Cabinet will be sworn in on Monday in the presence of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, his media office said on Sunday. National People's Power led by Dissanayake swept the parliamentary elections held on Thursday by winning a two-thirds majority. It also dominated the Jaffna electoral district – the heartland of the nation's Tamil minority. The 10th Parliament is set to convene for its first session on 21 November. According to Article 46, the total number of Cabinet ministers is limited to 30. The number of deputy ministers shall not, in the aggregate, exceed 40. —*PTI*

US reports 1st case of new form of mpox in traveller

NEW YORK, 17 NOV

Health officials said on Saturday they have confirmed the first US case of a new form of mpox that was first seen in eastern Congo. The person had travelled to eastern Africa and was treated in Northern California upon return, according to the California Department of Public Health. Symptoms are improving and the risk to the public is low. Mpox is a rare disease caused by infection with a virus that's in the same family as the one that causes smallpox. It is endemic in parts of Africa, where people have been infected through bites from rodents or small animals. Earlier this year, scientists reported the emergence of a new form of mpox in Africa that was spread through close contact including through sex. More than 3,100 confirmed cases have been reported just since late September. The vast majority of them have been in three African countries — Burundi, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.—*PTI*

Young woman found murdered in car boot in UK

LONDON, 17 NOV

A 24-year-old woman believed to be of South Asian origin has been found murdered in a car boot in east London after a missing person inquiry was launched for her in the East Midlands region of England. Northamptonshire Police named the victim as Harshita Brella on Saturday as the force launched a murder inquiry and appealed for information in the case. Police said it had received a call on Wednesday regarding concerns for Harshita's welfare and officers were deployed to her home address at Skegness Walk in Corby, Northamptonshire. After getting no answer, the police launched a missing person investigation and fast-track enquiries were made which led to the discovery of the victim's body inside the boot of a vehicle on Brisbane Road in the Ilford area of east London on Thursday.—*PTI*

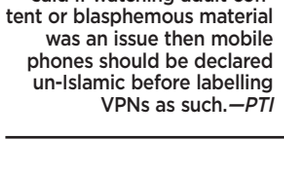


PHOTO: XXX

Pak religious body faces backlash over anti-VPN decree

ISLAMABAD, 17 NOV

Pakistan's leading constitutional religious body came under severe criticism after it issued an edict terming the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to access blocked content on the internet as 'un-Islamic'. The unprecedented pro clamation by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), which advises parliament on aligning legislation with Islamic teachings, enraged digital rights activists as well as some religious scholars. CII chief Raghib Naeemi said that using VPNs to access "immoral or illegal content" was against Sharia. Maulana Tariq Jameel, a prominent religious scholar, said if watching adult content or blasphemous material was an issue then mobile phones should be declared un-Islamic before labelling VPNs as such.—*PTI*

Xi warns US to make wise choices

Lima, 17 Nov

China's leader Xi Jinping met for the last time with US President Joe Biden on Saturday but was already looking ahead to President-elect Donald Trump and his "America first" policies, saying Beijing "is ready to work with a new US administration".

During their talks on the sidelines of the APEC summit, Xi cautioned that a stable China-US relationship was critical not only to the two nations but also the "future and destiny of humanity".

"Make the wise choice," he cautioned. "Keep exploring the right way for two major countries to get along well with each other."

Without mentioning Trump's name, Xi appeared to signal his concern that the incoming president's protectionist rhetoric on the campaign trail could send the US-China relationship into another valley.

After two days of meetings in Lima that rarely ventured beyond platitudes in discussing the strategies of the region's major economies, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum wrapped up on Saturday with a spirit of detente that many fear the annual summit may not see again for four years.

The 21 leaders from economies bordering the Pacific, including Biden and Xi, descended on Peru this week.

President Joe Biden shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping before a bilateral meeting during APEC Summit in Lima, Peru **PHOTO: PTI**

Few could help noting that Biden's late entrance to the traditional APEC family photo on Saturday lent itself to political metaphor, as the rest of the leaders prepared to pose onstage before looking around to find Biden missing. —*PTI*

Biden to become first US Prez to visit Amazon rainforest

Sao Paulo, 17 Nov

Joe Biden will become the first sitting US President to set foot in the Amazon rainforest during a brief stop Sunday in the Brazilian city of Manaus. Biden is expected to take an aerial tour over part of the world's largest tropical rainforest, meet local and indigenous leaders and visit an Amazonian Museum as he looks to highlight his commitment to the preservation of the region. —*PTI*

Trump picks oil firm CEO Wright as Energy Secy

WASHINGTON, 17 NOV

President-elect Donald Trump has selected Chris Wright, a campaign donor and fossil fuel executive, to serve as Energy Secretary in his upcoming, second administration.

CEO of Denver-based Liberty Energy, Wright is a vocal advocate of oil and gas development, including fracking, a key pillar of Trump's quest to achieve US "energy dominance" in the global market.

Wright has been one of the industry's loudest voices against efforts to fight climate change and could give fossil fuels a boost, including quick action to end a year-long pause on natural gas export approvals by the Biden administration. Wright also has criticised the "top-down" approach to climate by Left-wing groups and said the climate movement around the world is "collapsing". —*PTI*

Chris Wright **PHOTO: X**

MIRROR IMAGE OF 'BEAR'

Over 50 contestants gathered at Chicago park on Saturday for a lookalike contest to mimic actor Jeremy Allen White, star of the TV series 'The Bear'. The winner earned $50 and a pack of cigarettes, in reference to White's character, Carmen Carmy Berzatto, a chef who returns to his family's dive sandwich shop in Chicago **PHOTO: X**

F**k you: Brazil's First Lady curses at Musk

BRASÍLIA, 17 NOV

Brazil's First Lady Janja Lula da Silva swore at billionaire and X owner Elon Musk during a G20 social event on Saturday at which she spoke about the need to regulate social media.

While speaking to the audience, the horn of a nearby ship blared, prompting Janja to joke, "I think it's Elon Musk. I'm not afraid of you, f**k you, Elon Musk."

Musk responded to the video of her comments with a laughing emoji, and in a subsequent post, he quipped, "They are going to lose the next election," a reference to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. This exchange highlights the ongoing tension between Musk and Brazilian authorities. Earlier this year, Brazil suspended X for failing to comply with local regulations, including Supreme Court orders to remove accounts spreading fake news. —*Agencies*

Record smog in Lahore troubles residents

In Multan AQI levels passed a staggering 2,000 **PHOTO: X**

LAHORE, 17 NOV

The streets of Lahore are choking under a toxic blanket of smog, with air quality reaching unprecedented hazardous levels, putting the city's 14 million residents in peril.

Lahore regularly ranks among the world's most polluted cities, and this month, the city has exceeded hazardous levels on the Air Quality Index (AQI), with values often soaring above 1,000. In Multan, about 350km away, AQI levels passed a staggering 2,000 -- a height that left many residents in disbelief. Smog stings eyes and burns throats, and for many, the only refuge is staying indoors, though even that offers little relief.

With air purifiers a luxury few can afford, people like Rafia Iqbal, a primary school teacher, are facing a growing health crisis. "The children are constantly coughing, they have constant allergies," she said. —*ANI*

THOUSANDS EVACUATE

6th typhoon in a month hits Philippines

MANILA, 17 NOV

A powerful typhoon wrecked houses, caused towering tidal surges and forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to emergency shelters as it cut across the northern Philippines on Sunday in the sixth major storm to hit the country in less than a month.

Typhoon Man-yi slammed into the eastern island province of Catanduanes on Saturday with sustained winds of up to 195km per hour and gusts of up to 240 kph. The country's weather agency warned of a "potentially catastrophic and life-threatening situation" in provinces along its path.

There were no immediate reports of casualties from the typhoon, which was forecast to blow northwestward on Sunday across northern Luzon, the archipelago's most populous region. The capital region of metropolitan Manila would likely be spared from a direct hit but was placed, along with outlying regions, under storm alerts and warned of dangerous coastal storm surges.

Residents walk past destroyed houses in Philippines' Catanduanes after the Category 5 Super Typhoon Man-yi hit overnight **PHOTO: X**

The tidal surges went up to more than 7m near the seaside houses.

The entire province of Catanduanes had no power after the typhoon knocked down trees and electricity posts.

More than 7,50,000 people took refuge in emergency shelters, including churches and a shopping mall, due to Man-yi and two previous storms mostly in the northern Philippines.

The rare number of back-to-back storms and typhoons that lashed Luzon in just three weeks left more than 160 people dead, affected 9 million people and caused such extensive damage to residential communities, infrastructure and farmlands that the Philippines may have to import more rice, a staple food for most Filipinos. —*PTI*

Voting begins in Sengal as Prez Faye hopes to win

DAKAR, 17 NOV

Polls opened in Senegal on Sunday for a parliamentary election that is set to determine if the country's newly elected president can carry out ambitious reforms.

More than 7 million registered voters in the West African country are choosing 165 lawmakers in the national Assembly, where the party of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye currently does not hold a majority.

Faye, who was elected in March on an anti-establishment platform, says that has blocked him from executing the reforms he pledged during his campaign, including fighting corruption, reviewing fishing permits for foreign companies and securing a bigger share from the country's natural resources for the population.

In September, he dissolved the Opposition-led parliament, paving the way for a snap legislative election. His party is facing the Takku Wallu Opposition platform led by former President Macky Sall, alongside 39 other registered parties and coalitions.

Faye's political party, PASTEF, needs at least 83 seats in order to gain a majority in the assembly. Analysts say it has a high chance of securing that, given its popularity and Faye's margin of victory in the March presidential election.

Faye, 44, was elected with 54 per cent in the first round, becoming Africa's youngest elected leader, less than two weeks after he was released from prison. —*PTI*

Tata Motors eyes same PV sales in Q3

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Tata Motors is expecting passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales to maintain growth momentum in the ongoing quarter driven by year-end demand, according to a top company executive. As per Federation Of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) data, festive demand helped PV retail sales rise 32 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to 4,83,159 units in October. The segment reported a 7 per cent YoY increase to 6,03,009 units during the 42-day festival period this year. "In quarter three, we expect retail to be strong, driven by festivities and the year-end demand. Industry wholesale may be lower than retail, so as to reduce the channel inventory ahead of the new calendar year. That is for the industry," Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles MD Shailesh Chandra said
—PTI

Coal India's NCL to relocate Morwa township in MP

SINGRAULI, 17 NOV

Coal India arm Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL) is planning a huge rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) project and is working on relocating the residents from a township in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli, which has 600 million tonnes of mineable coal underneath, company's Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) B Sairam said. He said the township is spread across 927 hectares. The project will involve relocation of the entire township. "The good thing is that in this acquisition, the people are ready to relocate. So half of the problem is solved because the first resistance comes from the people only," he said. Once people are ready, the only thing to decide is the rates of the compensation and the R&R benefits, he said.
—PTI

Dr Reddy's, FDC recall products in US

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Dr Reddy's Laboratories and FDC Ltd are recalling generic medications in the US market because manufacturing issues, according to the US health regulator. The latest enforcement report by the Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) said the US-based subsidiary of Dr Reddy's Laboratories was recalling Morphine Sulfate extended-release tablets in the US because of "Failed Impurities/Degradation Specification". The USFDA also said that Mumbai-based FDC Ltd is recalling 1,55,232 bottles of Timolol Maleate ophthalmic solution in the US market. The report cited the reason for the recall as "Defective Container: Unable to get the solution out of the bottle as the spike of the cap was lodged in the nozzle of the product bottle". India is the largest supplier of generic medicines with around 20 per cent share in the global supply.
—PTI

Hyundai Motor bets on CNG cars amid demands

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Hyundai Motor India (HMI) is betting big on CNG fuel option with sales of models equipped with the technology witnessing increasing demand, said a top company official. The company, which currently offers CNG option in Grand i10 NIOS, AURA and EXTER, has seen an increase in contribution of these models to its domestic sales to 11.4 per cent in FY24 from 9.1 per cent in FY22. In the April-October period this fiscal, the contribution of these models rose to 12.8 per cent. "At present, India already has more than 7,000 CNG stations and aim is to have approximately 17,500 CNG stations by 2030 which will further fuel the CNG demand," HMIL Whole-time Director and COO Tarun Garg said
—PTI

RBI to municipal bodies: Charge more, serve better

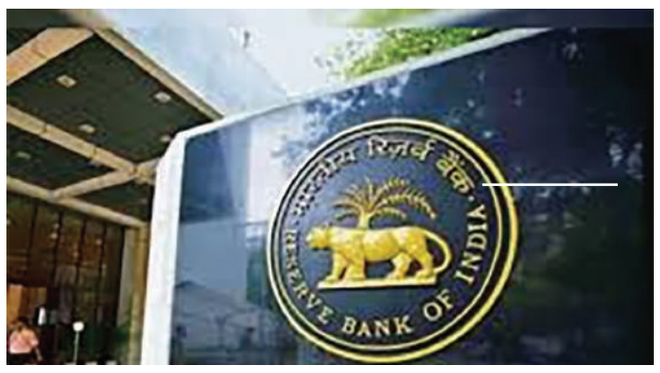
Central bank urges boosting non-tax income for urban bodies

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Municipal corporations need to impose adequate user charges for essential services like water supply and sanitation to boost non-tax revenues and provide quality public services, said a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report.

The Report on Municipal Finances delves into the fiscal position of 232 municipal corporations (MCs) from 2019–20 to 2023–24 (Budget Estimates), with a focus on the theme Own Sources of Revenue Generation in Municipal Corporations: Opportunities and Challenges.

The "MCs can significantly enhance them (non-tax revenues) by applying appropriate and adequate fees and user charges for essential services such as water supply, sanitation, and waste management while also ensuring seamless availability of high-quality public services," it said.



Report on Municipal Finances delves into the fiscal position of 232 municipal corporations (MCs) from 2019–20 to 2023–24 ***PHOTO: PTI***

These measures, combined with more transparent and accountable governance practices, can contribute to bolstering the financial health of MCs, setting off a virtuous cycle of better services for the public, stronger revenues and a continuous upgrade of the urban infrastructure, it said.

The major non-tax revenue sources include user charges, trade licensing fees, layout/building approval fees, development charges, betterment charges, sale and hire charges, market fees, slaughterhouse fees, parking fees, birth and death registration fees.

Sources of tax revenue, include property tax, vacant land tax, water benefit tax, advertisement tax, sewerage benefit tax, tax on animals, and taxes on carriages and carts.

"Non-tax sources are particularly important in the context of constraints on tax revenues. MCs in India earn 66.5 per cent of non-tax revenue from fees and user charges," the report said.

It noted that fees and user charges represent important sources of revenue for all civic bodies, particularly in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Tripura, where their share in own-source revenue outweighs that of property taxes.

This, the report said can be attributed to various factors, including a high degree of urbanisation, tourist destinations and the subsequent expansion in supplies of essential municipal services such as water supply, waste management and transportation.
—PTI

DEMANDS COST BREAKUP

CNG cos seek price hike, face fact-check

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

City gas companies like Indraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL) and Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL) are batting for an increase in CNG prices after supplies of cheaper input gas was cut for the second time in a month, but the government wants the retailers to produce a cost breakup to justify the hike.

The government, with effect from 16 November, cut supplies of low-priced natural gas coming from old fields to city gas retailers by up to 20 per cent.

This reduction came on the back of a 21 per cent reduction on 16 October.

City gas retailers IGL, which retails CNG in national capital and adjoining cities, Mahanagar Gas Ltd that does the same in Mumbai, and Adani Total Gas Ltd which operates in Gujarat and elsewhere, in regulatory filings flagged profitability concerns due to supply cut and hinted at price hike.

Officials in the ministry of petroleum and natural gas however are unimpressed as they feel the retailers operate on "hefty" margins and can easily absorb the additional cost they may have to incur on replacing the lost volumes with slighted higher priced gas from new wells or imported LNG.

PHOTO: X

"Take for instance IGL. It posted a net profit of Rs 1,748 crore on revenue of close to Rs 16,000 crore in the fiscal year ending 31 March, 2024. That is a margin of 11 per cent. MGL had a profit of about Rs 1,300 crore on revenue of Rs 7,000 crore. Which retailer earns that kind of margin?" a senior official asked.
—PTI

FII, global trends to drive mkt this week

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Trading activity of foreign investors and global trends will be the major driving factors for the equity markets in a holiday-shortened week ahead, according to analysts.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE have declared a trading holiday on November 20 for assembly elections in Maharashtra.

Elections to Maharashtra's 288-member state legislative assembly will be held on 20 November, and votes will be counted on 23 November.

"The Indian stock market will remain shut on Wednesday, 20 November, because of Maharashtra assembly elections. The election results, along with key global economic indicators, including US bond yields, dollar index performance, US unemployment claims, flash manufacturing and services PMI data and Japan's inflation data, will be pivotal in shaping market direction.

PHOTO: X

"High US bond yields and a strengthening dollar post-election have impacted emerging markets like India, and FII (Foreign Institutional Investors) activity remains a key factor, influencing Indian equities in the near term," said Pravesh Gour, senior technical analyst at Swastika Investmart.

The movement of global oil benchmark Brent crude and rupee-dollar trend would also influence trading.
—PTI

3 MONTH LOW

Forex drops to $6.4B for 6th week

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

India's foreign exchange (Forex) reserves dropped for a sixth consecutive week to hit a near three-month low of USD 675.65 billion as of 8 November, data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revealed on Friday.

The Forex reserves dropped by about USD 6.477 billion in the reporting week, declining by USD 29.2 billion from record high of USD 704.89 billion in September.

As per the RBI data, the major contituants of the reserves, the foreign currency assets dropped by 4.467 billion to USD 585.383 billion as of 8 November.

In the previous week, Forex reserves declined USD 2.675 billion to USD 682.130 billion.

The data shows that India's reserve position with the IMF reduced by USD 14 million to USD 4.298 billion in the week. However, India has maintained fourth position globally in foreign exchange reserves, following China, Japan, and Switzerland.

As per the RBI data, the major contituants of the reserves, the foreign currency assets dropped to USD 585.383 billion as of 8 November ***PHOTO: X***

In addition, the gold reserves declined by USD 1.936 billion, reaching USD 67.814 billion during the week and Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) decreased by USD 60 million to USD 18.159 billion.

The reserves had previously peaked at a record high of USD 704.885 billion before this recent decline, likely due to RBI intervention aimed at preventing a sharp depreciation of the Rupee.

A substantial foreign exchange reserve buffer helps shield economic activity from global shocks.
—ANI

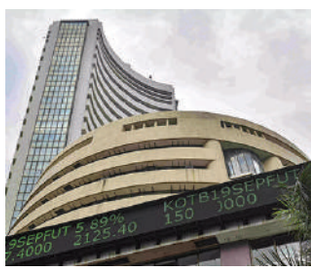


PHOTO: PTI

8 OF TOP 10 FIRMS TAKE ₹1.65L CR HIT IN MCAP

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Eight of the top-10 most valued firms together lost Rs 1,65,180.04 crore from market valuation last week, with HDFC Bank and State Bank of India (SBI) taking the hardest hit in line with a weak trend in equities.

Last week, BSE benchmark Sensex fell by 1,906.01 or 2.39 per cent. Equity markets were closed on Friday for Guru Nanak Jayanti.

The valuation of HDFC Bank tanked by Rs 46,729.51 crore to Rs 12,94,025.23 crore. SBI's market valuation eroded by Rs 34,984.51 crore to Rs 7,17,584.07 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever slumped Rs 27,830.91 crore to Rs 5,61,329.10 crore. Reliance Industries slipped by Rs 22,057.77 crore to Rs 17,15,498.91 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of ITC dived Rs 15,449.47 crore to Rs 5,82,764.02 crore, and Bharti Airtel tumbled Rs 11,215.87 crore to Rs 8,82,808.73 crore.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) dropped Rs 4,079.62 crore to Rs 5,74,499.54 crore, and that of ICICI Bank dipped Rs 2,832.38 crore to Rs 8,85,599.68 crore.

"Mounting concerns over rising CPI inflation and persistent disappointments in corporate earnings weighed heavily on sentiment," said Ajit Mishra, SVP (research) at Religare Broking.
—PTI

₹10 lakh fine for hiding foreign assets, income: IT

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The Income-Tax Department on Sunday cautioned taxpayers that failure to disclose assets held abroad or income earned in foreign shores in the ITR can attract a penalty of Rs 10 lakh under the anti-black money law.

The department issued a public advisory as part a compliance-cum-awareness campaign launched on Saturday to ensure that such information is reported by the assessee in their Income Tax Return (ITR) for assessment year (AY) 2024–25.

The advisory specified that foreign assets (FA), for a tax resident of India in the previous year, includes bank accounts, cash value insurance contract or annuity contract, financial interest in any entity or business, immovable property, custodial account, equity and debt interest, trusts in which a person is a trustee, beneficiary of settlor, accounts with singing authority and any capital asset, held abroad.

The department said taxpayers figuring under these criteria "must mandatorily" fill the information in their ITR even if their income is "below the taxable limit" or the asset abroad was "acquired from disclosed sources".

Taxpayers figuring under these criteria 'must mandatorily' fill the information in their ITR even if their income is "below the taxable limit" ***PHOTO: X***

- The department issued a public advisory as part a compliance-cum-awareness campaign launched on Saturday

"Failure to disclose foreign asset or income in the ITR can attract a penalty of Rs 10 lakh under the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015," the advisory said.
—PTI

Data revealed that debt mutual funds attracted inflows of Rs 1.57 lakh crore in October ***PHOTO: PTI***

Debt MFs recover ₹1.57 lakh crore in Oct

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Debt-oriented mutual funds witnessed a strong recovery in October, driven by investments in liquid schemes and attracting a net inflow of Rs 1.57 lakh crore after huge redemptions in the previous month.

Notably, 14 of 16 debt mutual fund categories reported net inflows during the month, while medium-duration and credit risk funds maintained their trend of consistent outflows.

The positive inflow boosted the asset base of debt mutual funds by 11 per cent to Rs 16.64 lakh crore in October-end from Rs 14.97 lakh crore at the end of September, according to data with Association of Mutual Funds on India (Amfi).

The data revealed that debt mutual funds attracted inflows of Rs 1.57 lakh crore in October, marking a sharp reversal from the outflows of Rs 1.14 lakh crore recorded in September.

Within the debt fund, liquid funds led the inflows with Rs 83,863 crore, accounting for 53 per cent of the total, followed by overnight funds and money market funds with Rs 25,784 crore and Rs 25,303 crore, respectively.

The ultra-short duration segment has seen inflow of Rs 7,054 crore.
—PTI

- The market capitalisation (mcap) of ITC dived Rs 15,449.47 crore to Rs 5,82,764.02 crore, and Bharti Airtel tumbled Rs 11,215.87 crore to Rs 8,82,808.73 crore

Boeing issues layoff notices to 400 workers

SEATTLE, 17 NOV

Boeing has delivered layoff notices to more than 400 members of its professional aerospace labour union, part of thousands of cuts planned as the company struggles to recover from financial and regulatory trouble as well as an eight-week strike by its Machinists union.

The pink slips went out last week to members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), The Seattle Times reported. The workers will remain on the payroll through mid-January.

Boeing announced in October that it planned to cut 10 per cent of its workforce, about 17,000 jobs, in the coming months. CEO Kelly Ortberg told employees the company must "reset its workforce levels to align with our financial reality".

The SPEEA said the cuts affected 438 members. The union's local chapter has 17,000 Boeing employees who are largely based in Washington, with some in Oregon, California and Utah.

Eligible employees will receive career transition services and subsidised health care benefits for up to three months.
—PTI

IN A RELIEF

Tomato prices drop by 22% amid supply boost

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Retail tomato prices declined 22.4 per cent month-on-month on improved supplies across the country, the Consumer Affairs Ministry said on Sunday.

The all-India average retail price of tomatoes stood at Rs 52.35 per kg on 14 November, down from Rs 67.50 per kg on 14 October, said an official statement.

During the same period, modal wholesale prices at Delhi's Azadpur mandi witnessed a sharper decline of nearly 50 per cent to Rs 2,969 per quintal from Rs 5,883 per quintal, driven by increased arrivals.

Similar price corrections were reported from key markets like Pimpalgaon (Maharashtra), Madanapalle (Andhra Pradesh) and Kolar (Karnataka), the ministry said.

The all-India average retail price of tomatoes stood at Rs 52.35 per kg on 14 November ***PHOTO: X***

"Though arrivals have subsided at major tomato centres in Madanapalle and Kolar, prices have eased due to seasonal supplies from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat filling supply gaps nationwide," it added.

Favourable weather conditions have supported both crop growth and smooth supply chain movement from fields to consumers, the statement noted.

The country's tomato production is projected to increase 4 per cent to 213.20 lakh tonne in 2023–24.

While tomatoes are grown year-round, production varies seasonally across regions. The ministry said adverse weather and logistics disruptions significantly impact prices due to the crop's high susceptibility and perishable nature.
—PTI

PHOTO: X

Mahimkar qualifies for boys U-17, men's final in MS Open

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

Harshit Mahimkar produced a fine show to qualify for the finals of the boys' U-17 and men's singles categories in the Maharashtra State Open Badminton Tournament here on Sunday. In the men's singles semifinals, the unseeded Mahimkar defeated the second-seeded Shvetank Karnik 21-13, 21-10 in 34 minutes at the Willingdon Sports Club. In the boys' U-17 semifinals, Mahimkar quelled the challenge from Sumit Made to record a 21-16, 21-15 win and set himself up for two summit clash appearances. In the other men's singles semifinal, Soham Phatak choked top-seeded Tanay Mehendale 21-11, 21-8. *—PTI*

Swiatek leads Poland's comeback over Czechs

PARIS, 17 NOV

Iga Swiatek won in singles and doubles to lead Poland's 2-1 comeback against the Czech Republic in the Billie Jean King Cup on Saturday.Poland will meet Italy in the semifinal after Jasmine Paolini likewise won her singles and doubles matches to lead Italy back to a 2-1 win over Japan. Marie Bouzkova beat Magdalena Frech 6-1, 4-6, 6-4 to give the Czech Republic a 1-0 lead on the indoor hard court in Malaga's Palacio del Deportes. The second-ranked Swiatek leveled the score after she held on for a 7-6 (7), 4-6, 7-5 win over Linda Noskova. The five-time Grand Slam winner then went back on the court after a short break to help Katarzyna Kawa beat Katerina Siniakova, the world's top-ranked doubles player, and Bouzkova 6-2, 6-4.*—PTI*

Retiring Nadal won't play Davis Cup singles

MADRID, 17 NOV

Rafael Nadal is ready to skip singles matches at the Davis Cup finals in Malaga if he feels he is not good enough to help Spain succeed in his farewell tournament. Nadal is retiring after the Davis Cup, the 22-time Grand Slam champion worn down by too many injuries at the end of his 20 years on tour. "I'll try to prepare as best as possible so I can be available to play, but I want to help any way I can, playing or not playing," the 38-year-old Nadal said on Saturday from Malaga in an interview published by the Spanish tennis federation. "First we have to see how I'm feeling in training. If I don't see myself ready to have a chance of winning in singles, I'll be the first who won't want to play."*—PTI*

Tata Steel Chess: Carlsen completes double in style

KOLKATA, 17 NOV

World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen completed a remarkable double at the Tata Steel Chess India tournament, clinching the blitz title with a round to spare here on Sunday. Just days after securing the rapid title, the 33-year-old Norwegian maestro produced a scintillating performance, including a dramatic turnaround against Indian prodigy Arjun Erigaisi in the penultimate round, to reach an unassailable 12 points. Carlsen capped off the tournament in style, defeating Vidit Gujrathi in the final round to finish with three consecutive wins and a total of 13 points to claim the blitz crown.This marks his second double victory in Kolkata, replicating his triumph from 2019.Filipino-American Grandmaster Wesley So staged a phenomenal comeback, winning six straight games and seven of his last eight. *—PTI*

Glenn urges Australia to go hard on emotional Virat

Kohli has shown a special liking for the pacy Australian pitches

SYDNEY, 17 NOV

Legendary Australian bowler Glenn McGrath has urged Pat Cummins and co to go hard on "emotional" Virat Kohli in the upcoming five-match Test series against India, starting from 22 November at the Perth.

"Without a doubt, especially after coming off a 3-0 loss against New Zealand, you've got plenty of ammunition to back yourself up," McGrath told CODE Sports.

"So put the pressure on them and see if they're up for it."

The 36-year-old has averaged 31.68 in his last 60 Test innings but this calendar year the numbers have fallen further to unimpressive 22.72 from six Tests. But Kohli has shown a special liking for the pacy Australian pitches, averaging 54.08 in four Tours down under.

"If they go hard at him if he gets in the fight with emotions, there's a bit of chat out there, who knows he might sort of lift," McGrath said.

"But I think he's probably under pressure a little bit, and if he has a couple of low scores to start with, he could feel it.

"I think he's quite an emotional player. When he's up, he's up, and when he's down, he sort of struggles a little bit." *—PTI*

Virat Kohli PHOTO: PTI

Legendary Australian bowler Glenn McGrath PHOTO: PTI

Rahul boost for India ahead of Perth Test

India and India A face-off on Day 3 of the intra-team simulation match at Perth's Western Australia Cricket Association (WACA) Ground. At the start of the day's play, India received a huge boost in the form of KL Rahul who resumed batting practice after sustaining an elbow injury two days ago. India needs a solution at No. 3 after Shubman Gill was ruled out of the first Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy due to a thumb fracture. So far, Ruturaj Gaikwad has impressed as per the most, reports. On the other hand, India will also look to scan their fast-bowling options once more as they look to finalize their pace battery for the first Test, starting 22 November. *—PTI*

KL Rahul

Need to be proactive against Ashwin: Smith's tactic against spinner

Australian batting talisman Steve Smith wants to adopt a proactive approach against Ravichandran Ashwin in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy to avoid his struggles against the Indian spinner during the 2020-21 series.Ashwin had nicked off Smith thrice during that rubber, and later in 2023, the Indian off-spinner dismissed the Aussie twice as he could only make 22 runs against his old foe."I don't like getting out to off-spin in Australia. But he's also a very good bowler and he came in with some decent plans. There were a couple of occasions where he got on top of me," Smith told the Sydney Morning Herald."But then I got on top of him at the SCG when I was a bit more proactive (Smith made 131 and 81 at Sydney). So, that's key for me. Just be proactive against him and not let him settle and bowl the way he wants to," he added.

Ashwin and Smith PHOTO: PTI

Devdutt to stay back in Australia

Meanwhile, the Indian team management has decided to keep top-order batter Devdutt Padikkal in Australia as a batting back-up.Devdutt was part of the India A squad that played two four-day matches against their Australia counterparts recently. *—PTI*

NATIONS LEAGUE

Germany's Florian Wirtz celebrates scoring their fifth goal with Tim Kleindienst PHOTO: @DFB_TEAM_EN

Germany pulverise Bosnia 7-0 to seal top spot in group

FREIBURG, 17 NOV

Germany dismantled visitors Bosnia and Herzegovina 7-0 on Saturday with a statement win and two goals apiece from Florian Wirtz and Tim Kleindienst to secure top spot in their Nations League group A3 with a game to spare.

The Germans, who had already qualified for next year's quarter-finals of the competition, are on 13 points with Netherlands in second place on eight and are eager to re-establish themselves as an international force ahead of the 2026 World Cup. "We have no injuries from the game and our counter-pressing was extraordinarily good," said Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann after the biggest win for the team since he took over last year. "And then to score seven goals against an opponent sitting so deep is something. "We wanted to win possession and then quickly play the ball forward, be quick in transition, and find those runs, something we did not do often enough at the Euros (in June). We did it well," Nagelsmann added.

Germany, traveling to Budapest to face Hungary on Tuesday for their last group match, took the lead with in-form Jamal Musiala's looping header after only 90 seconds.

The Bayern Munich attacking midfielder has now scored in his third consecutive game for club and country.

Everything seemed to be working seamlessly for the hosts and they doubled it with striker Kleindienst's first Germany goal in the 23rd minute after he turned in Robert Andrich's shot.

Kai Havertz twice came close in an explosive first half before getting on the scoresheet in the 37th after a quick one-two with Wirtz, who bagged Germany's fourth goal five minutes after the restart with a dipping free kick that caught Bosnia goalkeeper Nikola Vasilj off guard.

With Bosnia's defense in complete disarray and unable to handle their opponents' speed, the hosts showed no signs of easing off and kept pouring forward. *—PTI*

Slovakia beat Australia to reach Billie Jean King Cup semifinals

MALAGA, 17 NOV

Slovakia knocked out Australia to move into the Billie Jean King Cup semi-finals for the first time since 2002 after singles victories by Viktoria Hruncakova and Rebecca Sramkova gave them an unassailable 2-0 lead on Sunday.

Hruncakova overcame Kimberly Birrell with a hard-fought 7-5 6-7(4) 6-3 win in a match lasting two hours and 30 minutes.

Hruncakova, 126 places below Birrell in the rankings, hit 32 winners while the Australian made 37 unforced errors.

World number 43 Sramkova stunned Ajla Tomljanovic with a ruthless performance, beating the former Wimbledon and U.S. Open quarter-finalist 6-1 6-2. Tomljanovic was struggling with a knee issue.

Slovakia shocked record 18-time champions the United States on Thursday to reach the quarter-finals.

Slovakia will face either defending champions Canada or Britain for a place in the final.

Poland and Italy have booked their places in the last four. Slovakia had beaten the U.S. the competition's most successful nation in the first round of the finals in Malaga.

Iga Swiatek's Poland, seeking its first title, will face Italy in the semifinals. *—PTI*

Viktoria Hruncakova

Tijil takes LGB Formula 4 overall title

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Twenty-two-year-old Bengaluru boy Tijil Rao from Dark Don Racing capped a brilliant run to his entire season as he sealed the drivers' championship in the LGB Formula 4 category in the 27th edition of the FMSCI National Racing Championship.

On a sunny Sunday at the Kari Motor Speedway, Tijil had opened a massive lead even before the last round was held on the outskirts of Coimbatore.

Even though seasoned racer Saran Vikram surprised everyone by winning the first and second races on Sunday, Tijil realized there was no point in attempting anything too hard as he was assured of the overall trophy.

Tijil Rao dominates in Formula LGB4 title race PHOTO: X

Indeed, the surprise of the morning was seasoned professional Saran Vikram (Momentum Motorsports) as he pushed the pedal to the metal and stayed ahead.

At one point of time in the first race, he was being tailed by Mehul Agarwal and Tijil Rao. But then, Tijil did not attempt to do anything too much and eased ahead. Saran timed 21:24.212 minutes. Mehul Agarwal (21: 25.349) and Tijil Rao (21: 25.545) were behind him.Saran was back at the wheel in the afternoon as he rode on the momentum again to win the last LGB Formula 4 race as well. He was streets ahead of the field as he timed 28:12.441. *—PTI*

Dalibor wins MSLTA 25K ITF tennis tournament

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

Dzech Republic's Dalibor Svrcina defeated top-seeded Khumoyun Sultanov from Uzbekistan to bag the singles title in the MSLTA 25K Men's ITF Tennis Tournament here on Sunday.

In the final which lasted for two hours and 12 minutes, the second-seeded Svrcina battled past Sultanov 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 to win his second title in two weeks.

Svrcina broke at regular intervals in the second and third sets after losing the first set while the 231st-ranked Sultanov struggled in the contest due to a thigh pull and could not recover completely.

The win propelled Svrcina 38 places higher in the rankings with 25 ATP points. He also took away the trophy and Rs 3 lakh cheque for the winner. Sultanov got Rs 1.80 lakh and 16 ATP points. *—PTI*

Dalibor Svrcina PHOTO: PTI

Deepika stars again as India cruise to semis

RAJGIR, 17 NOV

Defending champions India stormed into the semifinals of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy with an unbeaten record, defeating Japan 3-0 here on Sunday.

Continuing her stellar form, star striker Deepika netted a quickfire brace from penalty corners in the final quarter to seal the victory, following vice-captain Navneet Kaur's opener in the 37th minute.

With this win, India topped the league stage with a maximum of 15 points from five matches, ahead of Olympic silver medallists China (12 points).

India will take on fourth-placed Japan in the semifinal on Tuesday, while China will play third-placed Malaysia in the other last four games.

Deepika, the tournament's leading scorer, now boasts 10 goals, including four field goals, five penalty corners, and one penalty stroke, underscoring her dominance.

In the day's other matches, Malaysia beat Thailand 2-0, while China defeated South Korea by an identical margin.

The Indians secured their first scoring chance in the form of back-to-back penalty corners in the eighth minute but Deepika's flick from the second effort was brilliantly saved by Japanese goalkeeper Yu Kudo.

India earned another penalty corner in the 13th minute but yet again wasted the chance.

The Indians continued to dominate and secured their fourth penalty corner in the 25th minute but once again Kudo rose to the occasion and made three brilliant saves to deny the hosts. *—PTI*

India beat Japan 3-0 PHOTO: PTI

FIA GT WORLD CUP

Maro Engel wins thrilling Cup in Macao

MACAO, 17 NOV

Mercedes' Maro Engel has taken his second career FIA GT World Cup victory after an ultra-close battle between the leading group on wet Guia Circuit, with the Mercedes-AMG ace capitalizing on mistakes from Antonio Fuoco and Raffaele Marciello in the closing stages of the race.

Nine years after his victory in the inaugural running of the FIA GT World Cup, the German secured his second triumph in what was also the third straight victory for Mercedes-AMG in the world's most prestigious sprint race for GT3 machinery, following the manufacturer's successes in the previous two editions with current BMW man Raffaele Marciello.

The race got underway with the safety car leading the pack for the first four laps, leaving the 22 runners with 12 tours of racing action to decide the 2024 FIA GT World Cup.

Once the racing commenced, polesitter Marciello initially settled into the lead in his BMW M4 GT3 from fellow front-row starter Dries Vanthoor, Ferrari's Fuoco, and Engel, who were trying to go around the outside of the Italian as they were negotiating the Lisboa corner.

From that moment on, the top five, completed by another BMW of Augusto Farfus, were running pretty much nose to tail. Vanthoor initially managed to stay within 0.5s of the race leader, but his attention quickly had to shift from attacking to defending, with third-place man Fuoco looking very racey.

Mercedes' Maro Engel

With nine laps to go, the 296 GT3 with the 24 Hours of Le Mans winner behind the wheel launched a successful attack on the M4 GT3 of the Belgian into R Bend, the final corner of the circuit.

From that moment on, it went from bad to worse for Vanthoor who was immediately under pressure from Engel. The two came together in the mountain section of the circuit, with the Team WRT BMW driver brushing the wall at Turn 12, after a nudge from Engel, which ultimately led to him retiring the car. *—PTI*

WI chase down 219 to beat England by 5 wickets

GROS ISLET, 17 NOV

Dhai Hope and Evin Lewis made half-centuries in a rapid 136-run opening stand as the West Indies completed a record run chase to beat England by five wickets in the fourth Twenty20 international.

Hope made 54 from 24 balls and Lewis made 68 from 31 balls, with seven sixes and four fours, in a partnership that lasted only 9.1 overs but enabled the West Indies to reach a winning target of 219 on Saturday.

The West Indies' confident start was shaken when Lewis, Hope, and Nicholas Pooran fell to consecutive balls in the 10th over. But captain Roston Chase put the innings back on track with 38 from 23 balls and Sherfane Rutherford competed the chase with successive sixes and an over to spare.

There were 32 sixes in the match, 16 from each team.

"We had to assess the conditions. That's one thing we struggled with in the first three games in the power play," Hope said. "We've been losing some early wickets so the main thing was to try and understand the best remedy. *—PTI*